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[BETSEY DILLON'S GRATITUDE.]

CHRISTINE'S REVENGE;

OR,
O'HARA'S WIFE.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!

LADY ELAINE found on turning round that she was looking into the face of a peasant woman, who carried on her arm a basket filled with water-cresses. She saw an honest, kindly countenance that had been accustomed to look boldly on hardship and suffering, and to smile cheerfully in the ugly faces of danger, privation and sorrow.

The woman's garb was of the simplest and the poorest, but the coarse apron was clean, the old black stuff dress was brushed free from dust. Lady Elaine looked at the woman without a gleam of recognition in her own sad, blue eyes.

"You have forgot me, my lady; I'm Betsey Dillon, that always brought water-cresses to the Castle. And you were so good to me before Christmas—gave me this very warm shawl I wear and a crown piece, and asked so kind-natured after my boy, whose leg was broke by the police as he was getting over a fence, and had no more to do with the riots than the blessed dead, as indade was proved, so the gentlemen sent him to the hospital, and I being a widow and with only him and my two little

girls to look to, came on here to Dublin to be near him. I have two rooms, my lady."

Betsey Dillon paused.

"I am so poor, Betsey," said Lady Elaine, "as poor as yourself—worse, for I do not know how to work, and I have a sore trial before me, so that I do not know how to help you much, but if this half-crown will be of use—"

"Ah, my lady, my pretty lady, the saints forbid that Betsey Dillon would touch one half-penny of your money. I heard of you, my lady, and it's cry myself sick, I did, at all I heard, for you were ever the angel to the poor, who loved the sight of your sweet face in their homes. Ah! my lady, it's wanting to help you, I am, if you would let me; it's your nurse I'd be, my darlint, and wait on you night and day and charge you not a farthing only my food, and it's care I'd take of you, my lady, for you're delicate and need it; and if you got with strangers, who only thought of themselves, when it's Betsey Dillon as would serve you on her knees!"

Sobs cut short the affectionate creature's speech. Lady Elaine's own eyes were full of tears.

"Thanks a thousand, but I must get away to London: I am afraid my mother will find me here. She must not find me; she wishes to shut me up for life, and to take my little child from me when it comes into this cruel world. Oh, Betsey, I must get away, I must sail to-night, and then in London I must find a lodging and I have people to see and question about—my—husband, you know." And Elaine looked straight at her homely friend. "You know I am O'Hara's wife?"

"Och! sure and it's that same I heard," said

Betsey Dillon, "and it's pity you, I did, in the depth of me heart; its spare him the gracious Queen will surely, my lady, for your sake."

"I don't know," Elaine answered, with a miserable smile, "it seems cruel he should die so young when he has hurt nobody but himself."

"Och, it's never hanged he'll be," said Betsey, in strong, rough, confident tones, "and now, my lady, think twice before you cross the says, ill as you are; its cost you your life, it will."

"And if it does," said Elaine, half sullenly, "who would care? Let me tell you, Betsey Dillon, that my father and my mother would thank heaven, for I am O'Hara's wife."

"Aye, and it's not thanking heaven for that same. I'd set them if I was you, and as beautiful as a blush rose as you are, and a fine fortune you'll have some day, and if you wish it, be happy with Mither Roland yet."

Elaine shook her head.

"Even if they spare his life he will be a convict in chains as long as he lives; it is hard for him to die so young, but when I think of all the misery he will be spared in the years to come, I feel inclined to say sometimes 'let him die, and let me die too. Good-bye, Betsey. Ah, there is a cab which will take me to the wharf and to the steamer for Dublin and Bristol."

"Indade, and you'll have to go to the station for Kingstown, my lady, if it's going you are, but a risk it is, sweet lily flower. It's myself would be plazed entirely to nurse and tend you free gratis for nothing; but, love, if you would only give me the chance."

But Lady Elaine was resolute; she was in a wild and feverish haste to put the seas between

herself and her countless mother. As yet she knew nothing of hardship and poverty, and she did not dread those stern foes to human happiness, but she had experienced imprisonment, and the idea of having to endure that form of suffering was intolerable to her.

She bade Betsey Dillon a kind adieu, and was forthwith driven off to the terminus from which she was to start for Kingstown. Poor Elaine was nearly knocked down in the wild rush for tickets when the box was opened, but she scrambled somehow through her difficulties and contrived to take her place in the railway carriage, and so reached Kingstown in time for the steamer, which started about an hour after she was on board.

She lay down in the ladies' cabin ill and weak during the whole voyage, which was long and boisterous. When she stood on the quay at Bristol, it was night, and the rain was falling in a deluge. However, she called a cab and asked to be taken to a cheap hotel. Poor Elaine, her voice faltered over the word which betrayed her poverty.

She was taken to an hotel, small and old-fashioned. The landlady, a stout matron, with severe eyes, looked suspiciously at Elaine.

"I want a cup of hot tea, please, and a bedroom. To-morrow I am going to London. I have come here by the Irish packet."

Lady Elaine's whole luggage was slung in a bag on her arm. The hostess of the "Rose" frowned and wondered.

"We require payments in advance from strangers."

"Oh, of course," said Elaine, who supposed it was the custom. She took out her purse. "How much?" she asked.

"Room, two shillings; tea, two; breakfast, two; chambermaid, one; candle, sixpence—seven-and-sixpence."

Elaine paid it and thought it cheap. Then the chambermaid led her to a little neat room at the end of a corridor, where, after a refreshing cup of tea, she slept well in a soft, wholesome bed. It was late when she awoke and dressed, rang for her breakfast, and asked to be driven to the station in time for the twelve train to London. What a long, wearisome journey was that; and when she arrived at night at Paddington she asked again for a cheap hotel, and this time found herself in quarters dingy, dusty, unpleasant to the sight, with a fusty smell in her little close chamber and dirty window-panes, through which she could hardly distinguish the street when she awoke in the morning. As soon as she was dressed she rang for her breakfast. After that she asked to see the landlady, and plainly asked her to recommend her a room and a nurse.

"For I feel very ill now," she said. "My journey has exhausted me."

"If I knew your good gentleman's address," said the landlady, "I would take care of you myself, my maid and me, for we don't do very much in letting rooms here. I'd charge you a pound a week, board and all, and if you don't consider that cheap I do, but I should like his address. I never take any but respectable married ladies, and you do seem so young."

"I am young," Elaine answered, frankly; "only sixteen."

"Whatever in the world made you marry so young?" asked the landlady, who was a woman with a fat white face, a dingy black dress and a soiled white cap.

"Ah, madame, that is my own secret. Is it necessary for me to tell my history before people will let me a room?"

"Only to know if you are respectable, that is, are you married?"

"Madame, what an insult!" said Elaine, turning pale. "I am married, and could show you the certificate of my marriage, but I do not wish to. I am willing to pay what you ask in advance."

"Ah, that alters the case," said Mrs. Greenwood, "and," she added, "you can stay if you like."

Elaine paid three pounds in advance, and then a fire was lighted for her in the little gull room, and she took up her abode there. How her

money had dwindled. She had not four pounds left to buy the commonest necessities for the little one whom she expected to hold in her arms within a week. She called Mrs. Greenwood, and asked her to go with her to buy flannels and dresses, all of the cheapest, for the child.

"And you, ma'am, have no luggage," said Mrs. Greenwood.

Elaine shuddered.

"I will only have for myself the merest necessities. I am very poor, Mrs. Greenwood, but I have a friend who will give me money if I ask him. She was thinking of Colonel Blandford, in whom she felt a strange but ignorant reliance that he would help her and not betray her to her mother. It is to be hoped he is your husband," said Mrs. Greenwood, severely.

"No, he is not," Elaine answered calmly.

Mrs. Greenwood was filled with curiosity touching her beautiful lodger. She went out with her to purchase necessities. Elaine returned much exhausted. The very next morning she awoke ill and in pain, but she bore all like a heroine.

Mrs. Greenwood called in her own doctor, and towards afternoon Lady Elaine O'Hara became the mother of a tiny white baby boy, whom she clasped to her heart with all a mother's ecstasy. She lay awake that night planning the future of the babe who nestled by her side. All sorts of fancies filled her head. A new existence had opened for her. The cherub at her side seemed like an angel sent from Heaven to still the wild pain at her restless heart, and to fill her with vague, noble aspirations after a higher and a holier life than she had ever dreamed of leading on earth. Poor child! Towards morning she slept, and then followed days of pain and weariness, but in less than a fortnight she was up and dressed and longing to get out into the bustling streets.

Mrs. Greenwood had let her see a newspaper, and from this she learnt that the trial of the Fenian prisoners was to come on in a week; that Colonel Blandford was at his town house in Eaton Square; that the Earl of Donnamore had returned to Belgrave Square, and that the Countess of Donnamore and her "daughters"—so said the papers—had gone to pass the remainder of the winter at Nice.

"They have given me up for lost!" said Elaine to herself. "Well, it is best so."

And yet a strange feeling of desolation crept round her young heart when she looked on the face of her sleeping babe and realised the fact that, except her, its mother, a creature hardly beyond a child in years, the infant had not a friend nor a protector in all the wide, cold world. In a week the Fenian prisoners would be tried—in a fortnight she would know whether her husband was to live or to die.

"I must seek out Colonel Blandford," she said; "cast myself at his feet, and entreat him to intercede with the Queen for my husband's life. I know he is much about the Court."

But Lady Elaine was never able to put this plan into execution. She tossed restlessly and feverishly in her bed all night, thinking painful thoughts, wishing to be up and away and doing, and cruelly awake to the grim fact of the utter poverty, the terrible destitution which threatened her and her child. She had paid her hostess to the end of next week. She would have about thirty shillings then between herself and starvation at the end of that time.

Meanwhile the doctor's bill was unpaid. Suppose Colonel Blandford refused to give her help? He might do so, and must she take her child in her arms and beg in the cold streets, when lately she had rolled smoothly in the carriage of her countless mother? Her thoughts refused to dwell on Roland manacled and in his cell awaiting the sentence of death. The idea was too horrible. As for her love for him it remained, but it had taken another form. So far as she herself was concerned her heart was more at rest in that she had convinced him that she had meant no unkindness; that it had ever been her earnest wish to be a true and faithful wife to him. She felt that he believed this vow, but it seemed to her as if there was no longer any

question of passion and conjugal love between "they twain."

If he did not go to his death he would go to the gloom and horror of perpetual imprisonment. For herself she must live for her boy's sake, but without any sweetness for herself in all the long years that were to come.

She was not sixteen years old, and yet it seemed to this creature, who had anticipated, while almost a child, the greatest events in human life, she who had been wife and mother before her years had reached their bloom, and who was to be widow, perchance, in a few weeks—it seemed to her, this creature of sixteen, that she had outlived her youth.

But while she was prepared to submit to an eternal separation from the husband to whom she had scarcely been joined, the thought of his hideous and violent death was unbearable to her, and the contemplation of poverty which she did not yet comprehend, but whose ugly shadow cast itself before her life path, frightened her into a fever.

She sank into an uneasy doze after reading those announcements, and tossing restless more than half the night in consequence, and she awoke sick, so it seemed, unto death, delirious, half wild with headache, in a high fever, with a burning throat and swollen tongue.

She lay in the dim border-land between life and death for three weeks. Mrs. Greenwood examined her lodger's effects, and shook her head as she asked herself:

"Who would pay all the expenses of this illness?"

The baby was kept alive on thin gruel; the doctor shook his head. He thought that here was most likely a sad case of desertion, for Elaine raved of Roland and of her mother and Christine.

"Mother! mother! I am dead!" she said one night. "I have lain in my dark grave three years, and my babe beside me. Roland is in prison. They did not kill him, only he will never, never, never come out again. When he dies he will be buried within prison walls, and will not come to us. You are gay, mother, and in the world your diamonds flash as they used to do. You have forgotten me, but a time will come when your proud eyes will weep tears as bitter as mine have wept. Mother, when you are dead your grave will be desolate and forgotten as mine is now."

"She has been led astray by somebody above her in rank," mused the doctor.

He was a kindly, white-haired man, who did not once ask himself the vexed question which tortured the soul of Mrs. Greenwood—how he was to be paid? Patience, low diet, quiet, an excellent though not robust constitution—all these combined, and Elaine came out of her fever.

Wan, white, wasted, the ghost of her former self, with large, wonder-filled eyes which seemed as if they had looked on other worlds and seen spirits—the danger was over, the doctor said, and now rest, good nourishment and kindness were all that were required.

"But how am I to be paid, Dr. Fletcher?" asked Mrs. Greenwood. "Look how I'm out of pocket now for gruel and things, and the rent of the room going on, and now who's to find all this wine and arrowroot and stuff. This is only a coffee-house. We don't do much trade; me and my husband has hard work to keep things going and pay our way. I think the young person ought to go to the workhouse."

"It would kill her to move her now," the doctor said, quietly. "Here are two pounds, get her a bottle of port wine and some arrowroot; let her have a chop every day. I'll pay for the room. What is the rent?"

"Seven shillings a week furnished, and cheap at the money."

Mrs. Greenwood pocketed the money, but she neither smiled nor thanked the doctor.

"I shan't have gained by this," she said, sullenly.

"Neither shall I," replied the doctor, quietly. "I am a hardworking man, with a scantily filled purse and a housefull of children, but I remember the priest and the Levite and the

Samaritan, and I would rather copy the last named. When this child is better I will make her tell me her history. She is a pretty creature, who has fallen among thieves. Now let you and I try to raise her up and set her feet in a straight path. We shall both be happier for it."

The good doctor went his way. Day by day, slowly but steadily, life and health came back to the young mother. Her boy was strong and beautiful for his age. She began to smile again, faintly at first, but with more light in the blue eyes than the doctor had yet seen; then her senses had come back, and with them the consciousness that her illness had prevented her interceding for Roland's life, that by this time his fate was sealed; either he was dead or a convict.

People had all concurred in telling her that one fate or the other must be his. She hardly knew now that it was settled without any help from herself whether she wished him dead or alive.

"In one case he suffers nothing, for I know he was very religious at heart, and though he was mistaken, he wronged nobody save himself, so that he sleeps in peace till the last triumph shall call him before a Judge more merciful than these earthly ones. If he is alive he suffers, and for this life he has not any hope."

For everybody had told her that he could never look for pardon.

"How good you are to me, doctor," she said, one day to Doctor Fletcher.

She was now sitting up dressed in an arm-chair before the fire.

"Am I? Well, my poor child, I am glad you think so; but now that you are better, I want you to tell me the story of your sorrows. I suppose you have no husband?"

"I had one, but I believe he is dead, and if not I shall never, never, never see him again."

She shook her head, tears fell on the bit of work she was engaged on—a frock for her child.

"Rascal!" said the doctor, who thought the author of poor Elaine's misery was some gay, selfish, heartless deceiver.

"No, he was led-wrong, mistaken. He was a dreamer of dreams; cut off in the first flush of his youth. Ah, how beautiful he was. I think the boy will be like him."

"Let us hope not in wickedness," said the doctor.

"Ah, he was not wicked, only wild and discontented."

"Then did he deceive you with a false marriage?" the doctor asked, bluntly.

Elaine looked at him gravely with her honest, lovely eyes.

"No, there was no intentional deceit, though if I had known his recklessness and ignorance of this hard world, I would not have married him when I did. I thought I was saving him. I was only an additional weight to drag him down to ruin."

The doctor looked puzzled.

"It was you he ruined, not himself. What was his name?"

Elaine was white with emotion.

"Sir, don't ask! I shall never, never bear it in the world, nor will his boy. I am separated from the father of my child for all time. In the next world we shall meet, I believe."

"Where is this man?" the doctor asked, sternly. "Don't think I ask from impertinent curiosity. I wish to place you in a position where you will be able to earn your bread, and I must give some account of your antecedents to your employers."

Lady Elaine raised her head haughtily for a moment.

"Sir," she said, "my secrets are mine; if I can do honest work for honest pay, why look into the sorrows of my past; they are sacred, sir. All my happiness sleeps in a deep grave; let not rough feet trample over that desolate resting place—let it be forgotten. No, sir, I cannot make my story public. It would entail on me the loss of all I hold dear—my child and my freedom."

"Nonsense, you have done nothing which

deserves imprisonment; you have never been a thief?" asked the doctor.

Elaine smiled faintly.

"I hope not, indeed, but there are other prisons than the criminal gaols—there are lunatic asylums."

"But you—odd as your story sounds—are as sane as I am," said the doctor.

Elaine smiled again.

"There are religious houses."

"Ah, and did your parents threaten you with putting you into one?"

Elaine nodded assent.

"And then you ran away?"

"And then I ran away."

"I see. But tell me: was it because a rascal had deceived you with a false marriage?"

"It was because I married a man beneath me, who is dead; but they will never pardon me."

"Then, my dear young lady, whoever they are, they are wicked wretches," said the doctor; "but I wish you would tell me his name?"

"No, no no. Neither can I tell mine before my marriage, nor my true name now; I must hide. I will not see my mother again."

"If you would confide the truth to me," said the doctor, "I would keep your secret, but I would procure you a home and give your employers another version of your story with the names altered?"

"Call me Kate Anderson; say I ran away and married a man who was arrested for—forgery, and now is either dead or serving his life-long penance. My parents, proud people, would place me in a convent if they found me."

"Is there a spice of truth in this tale?"

"More than a spice, it is the true outline of my life's history—"

"And your father is?"

"An officer in the army."

"His name?"

"That I will not tell. Say that I refuse to name it—I am Mrs. Anderson, a widow."

The doctor was very much puzzled. The firmness of this young creature in keeping her secret amazed him. Her whole manner betokened exquisite refinement and purity; he felt convinced that she was speaking truth. Yet why this mystery?

"I will befriend you," he said, presently; "perhaps in time you will tell me more of your story; meanwhile could you undertake the position of nursery governess to some children in the suburbs—twenty pounds a year and all found?"

"Most willingly; but who will take care of my boy?"

"He shall be placed out to nurse with a worthy woman a little way in the country. You shall see him every month, so will I, to look after his health."

She held out her arms towards the bed where the child lay.

"My baby," she said, "it will be like taking my soul from my body."

"Not so bad as that," said the doctor, cheerfully. "Meanwhile there is a newspaper to amuse you."

And he tossed one into Lady Elaine's lap, then he put on his gloves and took his leave.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known.

LADY ELAINE seized the paper in feverish haste, unfolded it, searched and scanned each column in eager, anxious fear, and her eyes fell on the following announcement:

EXECUTION OF THE TWO FENIAN PRISONERS.

Two! Was Roland one of these? Her heart beat to suffocation. While she read on the lines danced before her eyes. It seemed impossible to find out the names of those two miserable men, one of whom suffered for having shot Foster dead, the other for having stood by consenting to the murder, but above all, as an example of the danger of rebellion and the de-

termination of the English Government to put it down with a strong arm.

At last she finds the names of the two poor strangled wretches—Peter Daly and Daniel Blake, not Roland O'Hara. She read nervously all the piteous details of condemned men's last days on earth; how they had at first been silent and sullen, and how the good priest of their faith had exhorted them tenderly to repent of their past sins and prepare for the mighty hereafter. How that at length they had melted into tears and broken out into fervent supplications to Heaven for mercy, and how that the priest had shrived them and they had grown gradually calmer and stronger and more hopeful, not of pardon in this world, but of forgiveness from a higher tribunal, and of entering upon the peaceful sleep of the ransomed who wait for the end of Time and the dawning of the new life.

She read of the quiet sleep of the condemned while the sound of the erection of their scaffold was still in their ears; of their last morning on earth when they walked forth to die, pale, but with faltering steps; of the last blessing of the priest; of the falling of the drop; of that hideous few minutes while the helpless struggles lasted; then of the stillness that followed; of the cutting down; of the ruined temples where lately dwelt two human souls, and then of the burial within the prison walls without rite of church, with the pagan baptism of quicklime, and the covering up of the graves, and the two great ends of a pacified justice, and a tremendous warning "to all whom it might concern" being achieved.

Thus far Elaine read. She had never allowed her mind to dwell upon the horrible details of an execution before. That Roland should die and escape the long penance of years had seemed to her not worse than that penance, but now when she reads of the horror and gloom of that deadly tragedy which the law performs every now and anon when a wretch has soiled his hands with the blood of a fellow-creature, and justice claims as her right "A life for a life, she said to herself:

"Thank heaven, then, they have not killed Roland; but where is he?"

So she searched again, and at last she found the following paragraph:

"The young convict O'Hara, who was proved at the trial to have only been attempting to escape when Mr. Foster was shot, and who had doubtless joined the rebels in a mere freak of temper or vanity, received her Majesty's gracious pardon last Saturday. He is in very delicate health, and has been received into the Middlesex Hospital, where he lies in a precarious condition."

"I must go and see him," Elaine said to herself. "He is free, and I must live with him, work with him. I am his wife."

She lay back amid her pillows and wept tears of relief and thankfulness. When the doctor came the next day he found her much better.

"I have written to my friends," he said, "and they will answer me this week. You still think yourself capable of undertaking the position of nursery governess?"

"I think not," Elaine answered. "I find that I may have other duties to perform."

The doctor looked at her in displeasure.

"You are a changeable, capricious young lady," he said. "I really don't know what to make of you."

Elaine flushed crimson.

"If it is as I think," she said, "I will, under secrecy, tell you my true name and my true story before I begin these new duties that I spoke of, only please tell me how long it will be before I go out again?"

"You must not go out for a week, but it is fine April weather now, and if it lasts you may take a drive in a week's time. Make haste and get well."

Lady Elaine did do "her best" to get well. She adhered strictly to all the doctor's rules.

"And now this fine morning you may go out for a little drive," said the doctor. "I have

ordered a cab to take you once round the Regent's Park, you and the child, and then to bring you here."

"How good and kind you are," Elaine said, looking with tearful eyes on the doctor.

She started in the four-wheeled cab at the appointed time, taking her child with her, but she begged the man to drive her to the Middlesex Hospital, which is not a tremendous distance from the Regent's Park. The man obeyed. Arrived at that rather gloomy-looking brick house, Elaine alighted, crossed the yard with faltering steps, and then, sick and wild with excitement, she said to the porter who opened the door:

"Pray let me see a patient here called Roland O'Hara. I am his wife."

The man stared at the pale, lovely face with curiosity. Something of the story of the wild wedding of an earl's daughter with a Fenian peasant was known to him, but of late the countess and her friends had given much gold as hush money, and another story of Lady Elaine's partial mental derangement, and her entrance, through sheer religious enthusiasm, upon the life of a recluse in a convent in Spain was going the rounds. In short the porter hardly believed that the pretty young creature in the now rather shabby fur cloak was really the daughter of an earl. The said cloak, be it known, had done extra duty as a wrap and coverlid for the last two months.

"His wife! I'm sorry, ma'am, poor fellow, he—"

The man paused.

"Not dead?" Elaine asked, faintly. "Don't say he is dead?"

"Well, ma'am, will you sit down, and I will bring you a glass of water, and give me the child, you will drop it else, poor little creature."

Elaine tottered to a chair; the man took the child, carried it away, and returned with a gentlemanly man in black, one of the doctors of the establishment. This personage carried a glass of brandy and water. He put it to Elaine's lips and said:

"Drink!"

She obeyed like a machine. Then looking at him earnestly, she asked:

"Is Roland O'Hara dead?"

"Yes; he died yesterday at two o'clock."

She uttered a little, bitter cry.

"Were you his wife?" asked the doctor, gravely.

She nodded; she could not speak.

"And what was your name?" Who were your parents? You seem so young."

The doctor had heard the rumours; then he had heard them contradicted.

"I am young, but who I was, sir, matters not. I have heard that I am a widow; I know my fate; I have my child to live for; give him to me. May I see my husband?"

The doctor shook his head.

"It seems hard, but in this peculiar case it is against the rules. He was sent here by the prison authorities, and his body belongs to the hospital; it is now in the dissecting-room. When it is done with, the remains will have Christian burial in the pauper allotment at Kensal Green, but the body is not in a fit state for you to see, it would be painful. Take some more brandy. If I could have prevented this, believe me I would."

"Oh, how hard and cruel the world is," said Elaine.

She went away without another word, carrying her child. During many days she lay ill and weak after that drive, which the good doctor had thought would have done his young patient so much good.

He had forgotten to take the number of the cabman, or he would have asked him what befell on that day. As for Elaine she would tell him nothing, but she looked at him with those sad eyes, and he wondered at the depth of misery which he read there.

Slowly, however, her fine constitution asserted itself, and Elaine grew stronger.

"I must work," she said, to the doctor, "for I must support my child, and if you will pro-

cure me that situation, I will do my best to perform my duty in it, and I will repay you what I owe you."

"That is well," said the doctor, cheerfully.

"Nothing like self-reliance and a cheerful facing of difficulties. I will help you, my dear, to the best of my power. You know I told you of a family where you would be a nursery governess, twenty-five pounds a year and all found. I think you may be happy there. Now I will tell you where the family reside—at Sydenham, in a fine villa. Mr. Cassimer is a city merchant; the family are rich, and live in grand style, keep a carriage, footman and coachman, cook, two housemaids, and Mrs. Cassimer has a maid, so you see there are quite a number of servants."

Elaine smiled faintly, and thought of the twenty servants which had been her household staff as long as she could remember.

"Mrs. Cassimer is very well connected," went on the doctor. "She is a niece of Sir Andrew Adamson, M.P. for Bucks. She had no fortune; her father is a country parson. She is a little too fond of wealth and display, vain rather, pretty, certainly; but she will not interfere much with you, for she leaves her children mostly to the care of the head nurse; but I have arranged everything. You will have four pupils—a boy of seven, two girls, six and nine. 'They are high spirited and troublesome,' the nurse says, 'but affectionate and kindhearted.' You will have a room to yourself, and dine at one with the children. You will not often see Mrs. Cassimer, I suppose."

"I shall be thankful and content," said Elaine; "but, Doctor Fletcher, you must let me know how much I owe you that I may save up and pay you out of my salary."

"You shall do that in time," the doctor said, with a smile, "for I am not rich enough to make presents; but at present you must accept this ten-pound note to buy you some dresses, for you have only one, I fancy."

Elaine blushed crimson.

"Only one, the one I wore when I left home. Never mind, I will pay you all; it will take all my first year's salary to get out of your debt."

"No," said the doctor, "for I shall charge you nothing for medical attendance. I hope you will justify my recommendation, my dear, and I believe you will."

A year has passed; it is a lovely morning in May, the French windows of the schoolroom are open to the lawn, the bees and butterflies are dipping into the flower cups; there is a belt of elms at the end of the grass, amid their boughs sits a weird bird seldom seen, of whom strange tales are told.

He or she—for we know not the sex of this messenger of spring—is repeating the refrain, cuckoo! cuckoo! Two little girls and a little boy are seated at a long table, slates and pencils in their hands.

Their governess sits erect, and reads to them from a little book; they write as she reads, and spell according to their lights. The governess wears a dress of pure white, a simple lace ruff at her throat; her golden hair is gathered into a large glossy knot at the back of her head, her face is the very perfection of glorious beauty—great blue eyes, with long dark lashes, a perfect Greek outline of nose and brow and chin, a complexion of lilies, with cheeks like the bloom of the wild rose.

Elaine—Lady Elaine, known as Mrs. Anderson, a young widow, is the governess of these two little Misses and one little Master Cassimer. Despair has gone out of her heart. There is a look of calm in the lovely eyes, a look which will brighten into hope and perchance into joy, if only Fate will be kind.

Elaine has been one year at the Cassimers; everybody likes her; the children love her. She leads a wholesome, peaceful life, sufficient for her at present, for she was so young when her troubles came upon her, that they have not been able to print themselves so deeply on her heart as one might have fancied.

She knows that she is an earl's daughter,

dead to her title, condemned to work for her bread, but then she knows she is beautiful, and she knows she has a little cherub son with whose beauty all the world—that is her world—is charmed.

He is at nurse within a mile of the Beeches. She sees him three or four times a week. She knows her husband is dead, but there is a deep and secret conviction in her heart that she will love and be beloved again before many years are past.

She is like a summer day after a thunderstorm; there are the traces of tears, or at least of past sorrows, in the shadows of her lovely eyes, but the lips smile like June roses. The princess had a golden apple, and whenever she had a question to ask herself which she could not answer, she took out the golden apple from its silver case.

A step on the lawn outside; a man's face between Elaine and the sunlight! Whose?

(To be Continued.)

A LOST LOVE.

"Lost at sea with the ship and crew,
Captain Floyd, on the first of May."
The paper fell from her snowy hand.

A shadow darkened the summer day.
Just for a moment her proud, cold heart.

Stirred with a sad, remorseful sigh.
"Poor boy!" she said, "he loved me well

In days gone by."

Did she remember the words they said
Under the stars one summer night?

He had trusted with all his heart
Promises she had held so light;
Trusted her with its every hope;
She had bartered them all for gold.
What to her was this broken life?
A tale that's told.

She has homage, and wealth, and rank,
Leads a world of fashion and show,

Ever within her splendid home
Merry revellers come and go.
Ever the world doth praise her lot,
Calm and bright as a summer sky.
Is she happy? She knows her life
A gilded lie.

Better if she could be again

As she was in her simple youth,
Ere she bartered for rank and gold
Honest love and her promised truth.
Utterly heartless, cold, and false,
It were better that she should be
Dead with her wronged and slighted love

Under the sea.

L. E. B.

A NOTABLE geological event in North Germany is the discovery of a forest of buried timber along the bed of the river Fulda near Marburg. According to the "Athenaeum," the trees, of which there are from two to three hundred, are mostly oaks, and are well preserved, lying from six to nine feet beneath the ground. The wood is black, and is in sufficiently good condition to be made into furniture. One of the trees is fifty-nine feet in length, with a base five feet across.

The preservation of meat by treating it with borax, either in solution or a powder, appears to render it unsafe for food, if we may accept the statement of a medical writer, who has lately called attention to the subject. Small doses of borax frequently repeated produce poisonous effects, and just such doses are involuntarily taken by the unwary consumer of this preserved meat. So dangerous a method ought not to be tolerated.



[A PRESENTIMENT OF EVIL.]

FRANK BERTRAM'S WIFE;

OR,

Love at First Sight.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook Him," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

PRESENTIMENTS.

And coming events cast their shadows before.
CAMPBELL.

WE have nearly all of us learnt by bitter experience, that after a time of unusual happiness, some unexpected trouble follows. When our spirits are at their highest, they are brought down by some crushing blow. It is only another reading of the old proverb—before a storm there comes a calm.

One morning, about ten days after her return to Kilburn, Beatrice Grey awoke with a strange presentiment of coming trouble. There was apparently no cause for this. The day before she had been gay and happy; the evening had been spent at a concert in Frank Bertram's company, his manner to her was what it had ever been. No breath of discord marred the strange delight they always felt in each other's society. They had parted with the promise of a speedy meeting, yet Beatrice awoke with a strange, dull pain at her heart—a bitter conviction of coming sorrow.

She pressed one hand to her throbbing head, and vainly tried to reason with herself. Beatrice was not superstitious; she possessed a clear brain and sound judgment. One by one she recalled the events of the day before, to

seek in them a reason for the despondency which oppressed her. In vain, she could discover nothing.

Almost mechanically she dressed herself and went downstairs. Here all was the picture of cosy comfort. A bright fire burned in the grate; the table was spread with a dainty breakfast, and Mrs. Stone, smiling as benignly as though trouble were many miles away from her, was sitting in her own particular easy chair, waiting the appearance of her young friend. Beatrice exchanged the morning greeting, and took her place at the table.

"Are there no letters?" she asked, eagerly.
"My dear child, where are your eyes? Look in your plate; there they are; half-a-dozen at least."

Miss Grey took them up with trembling fingers and opened them one after the other. What she expected to have found there she did not know, but she was unfeignedly relieved when they proved to be merely business communications of the simplest and most uninteresting nature.

"I am so glad," she said, in her relief. "Mrs. Stone, do you know I was half afraid to touch those letters. I thought they might hold bad news?"

"Bad news?" repeated the widow in surprise. "What on earth made you think of that?"

"I don't know. I woke up with the impression that something was going to happen."

"I don't put any faith in impressions. Besides, dear, what bad news can you have? I call that one of the advantages of being alone in the world, that one has no one to be anxious for; now you see, Beatrice, you have nothing to fear; you have gained the public favour at one leap, and nothing can take it from you."

"Yes, it could," dissented the beautiful actress; "fortune is very fickle. The same people who smile at me now may frown to-morrow. The next part I assume I may be hissed instead of applauded."

But Mrs. Stone was far too matter-of-fact and

common-place to understand the unknown dread which oppressed Beatrice.

"Really, my dear, you should not give way to such thoughts. You are sure to be a successful actress as long as you are on the stage, unless indeed, you choose to stay there until you are old and decrepid."

"I shall never be that," answered Beatrice; "I shall never live to be old."

"You are perfectly morbid this morning; what makes you think of such awful things?"

"But I don't call that awful, Mrs. Stone. I can't fancy myself getting old and feeble, my cheeks lined with wrinkles and my eyes weak and faded. I would rather die in harness, in all the force of my intellect; besides I should dread being old, people would not have smiles for me then. You tell me I cannot be unpopular, because I am young and fair; each year that comes will take something from my youth, something from my beauty. I do not want to live till people do not care to look at me."

She spoke quickly and excitedly. Mrs. Stone went on with her breakfast calmly the whole time. As Beatrice ceased her passionate outburst the chaperone turned to her mildly:

"You are eating nothing, dear, let me give you a little ham, or those eggs are excellent."

Beatrice sighed. The truth of her own words to Frank Bertram came home to her very bitterly. "In all this world there is nothing so rare as real sympathy." She saw it was useless, hopeless to attempt to make her companion understand all that was passing in her mind, so she drank her coffee and tried to swallow some of the ham Mrs. Stone highly recommended, whilst that lady rattled on, making a great many harmless remarks, with no great meaning in them, in the laudable aim of "cheering up" Miss Grey.

Breakfast over Beatrice went upstairs to the drawing-room and sat down to the piano; she was passionately fond of music, and it had more power to soothe her troubled mind than any other antidote; she played for nearly two hours, pouring her whole heart out in the slow sad

melodies which seemed all her fingers would produce that morning.

She felt better when she left the piano and took up a book of ballads which Frank Bertram had lent her; he usually called in the morning, and she quite expected him on this occasion, and looked forward to his coming with a weary, feverish longing she could not understand; but time passed, and the knock she had learned to distinguish from all others did not come.

She stayed at home all the afternoon; she listened and watched and waited in vain. What did it mean? Last night he had distinctly said he should see her to-day, and yet he came not.

The chaperone had not failed to see her disappointment. Mrs. Stone might not understand much about presentiments and forebodings, but she did know something about love, and was better aware of Beatrice's real feeling for Frank Bertram than the girl herself.

Mrs. Stone knew perfectly well that Miss Grey had given her whole heart to the man who had taken care of her in the railway accident, but she doubted very much whether Mr. Bertram had given his in return. For days past she had been seeking an opportunity to speak to Beatrice. To-night the actress unconsciously gave her an opening.

"It is very strange Mr. Bertram has not been to-day. He said particularly last night he should call."

"He may have been prevented," carelessly.

"I do not think any light thing would have prevented him from coming. He is so exact in keeping his engagements."

"But this was not a special engagement. He was here yesterday and the day before."

"Yes."

"Beatrice," began the chaperone, with an effort, "don't you think you are beginning to depend too much on Mr. Bertram. Just think how you will miss him when he goes away."

"Yes," replied Beatrice, utterly unconscious of the widow's real meaning, "of course I shall miss him very much, but then he is not going away yet."

Mrs. Stone persevered.

"He seems to have a great deal of time on his hands. Does he not follow any profession?"

"No, he is a private gentleman. He is very fond of art and literature, and I suppose that is the reason he spends his time in London. I know he told me once he hated a country life?"

"Is he married, Beatrice?"

For an instant a brilliant crimson died Miss Grey's cheeks, and the hand which played with her book trembled. If a girl really loves a man, even though herself unconscious of that love, she cannot hear unmoved any mention of his marriage.

"I believe not," she answered, coldly. "I never asked him."

"Have you heard from Mr. Arnold lately, Beatrice?" inquired Mrs. Stone, who, like a wise politician, felt she had said enough for the present. "I thought he was going to send you his new play to read."

"He did send it, but I have not looked at it. I think I must be getting lazy. I don't seem to care to do anything."

"It is just as well you should enjoy your holiday, there is nearly a fortnight still before the theatre opens."

"I do so dread it," murmured Beatrice, her voice shaking with emotion. "Mrs. Stone, what is the matter with me? I positively fear the night of my reappearance. Something tells me I shall fail."

The widow saw how real was the girl's fear, and she spoke more soothingly than she had done in the morning.

"You are over nervous. When once the time comes you will forget all your fears."

"I hope I shall," unconvinced still. "I feel now as though something had gone from me and I should never have it again."

And Beatrice spoke truth. Something had gone from her—her heart. Never more could it be her own again.

"I wish Mr. Ashley would talk to you," ex-

claimed the widow, fairly frightened. "He would make you hear reason."

Beatrice smiled.

"He will do so as soon as he is better. What a long time it is since I saw him! The last time was just before we left town. He has been too ill to see anyone since we came back."

"But he is better now?"

"A little, they said, the last time I called. Oh, Mrs. Stone, what a terrible thing it would be if he were to die!"

"Beatrice!"

"I never thought of it before to-day. He looked very ill before we went away, and he has been laid up a long time."

"Beatrice, I shall send for the doctor if you go on like this. You must be going to have jaundice. First you are going to fail in your new part, then Mr. Ashley is dying. What will you say next?"

"I can't tell what it is, but, as I said to you this morning, I have a presentiment of trouble."

"But why should you have?"

"Perhaps because I have been so happy lately—too happy to last."

"I'm sure nothing ever comes of presentiments, though I daresay Mr. Ashley's brother would be glad enough if one of yours were realised."

"Surely even he"—with a most unflattering emphasis on the "he"—"could not be wicked enough to wish Mr. Ashley dead?"

"Percy Ashley is a thoroughly bad man," returned Mrs. Stone, decidedly.

She was perfectly right. In every respect the manager's brother was a complete contrast to himself. No one could have said amply in what Mr. Percy Ashley's wickedness consisted, but most would have agreed with Mrs. Stone.

Several years younger than his brother, and with generous endowments of face and intellect, his cleverness seemed to have been devoted in concealing his bad actions, since no one had ever known him perform a good one. He kept within society's pale, managed not to be blackballed at the clubs or struck off visiting-lists, gambled without arousing suspicion at his good fortune; but no man's name would have gained by being seen in Percy Ashley's company, and none of his friends would have liked to see him the husband of their sister.

His manners were good; like many another of his type, he had, in homely phraseology, a "way with him." He "took" immensely with most women, especially young ones, and broke many hearts without yielding his own.

From the moment of their introduction Beatrice Grey had regarded him with instinctive aversion, had shrunk from his advances in horror, and he, charmed with her beauty, had experienced the nearest approach to love he had ever known. She rose in her profession, but while she was still obscure he had felt certain of her success, and long before she appeared as Olivia he asked her to be his wife.

For weeks he continued his suit, until it amounted almost to persecution, then Beatrice appealed boldly to the manager. Generously he answered her; he gave Percy to understand that those who annoyed Miss Grey must answer to himself. He was rich and childless, many years older than his brother, who could not afford to offend him, consequently from that hour Beatrice had nothing more to complain of from Percy, but she had converted him into her bitterest foe.

He did not yet despair quite of tyrannising over her as a husband, if not, his whole life long he would seek the opportunity to injure or oppress her, and thus avenge the slight she had dealt him. It is no wonder Beatrice's voice trembled in speaking of such a man.

"Don't talk of Percy Ashley, Mrs. Stone, I am positively afraid of him."

As she spoke a servant entered bearing a letter, which she handed in silence to her mistress.

Beatrice's fingers shook as she took it, and she was pale as death, for the envelope bore a deep black edge, and the address was in the writing of Percy Ashley.

CHAPTER XIV.

ENGAGED.

A long, long kiss—a kiss of youth and love.

BYRON.

MRS. BERTRAM of the Knoll felt anything but her usual serene complacency in the summer days which followed her son's departure to his shooting-box in Norfolk.

Fate seemed to have been most unkind to this good lady of late. All her little plans had been crossed. If Frank had loved Muriel and stayed at home she thought she should have had nothing left to wish for; but as Frank had done nothing of this it followed that she had a great deal yet to desire.

She was in nature something like her son's. Her life, as his, had been one long success. Never, save in this one point of her son's aversion to matrimony, had she been crossed in her wishes.

She felt angry at her disappointment, and, like many another woman who cannot vent her anger on the real culprit, she vented it on another.

When Frank was fairly gone it occurred to the old lady that Muriel Lestrange was in some part to blame for his going. Muriel seemed just as happy without her host. She went about, indeed, with a lighter step and brighter face than she had done for days. Then, too, when Mrs. Bertram deplored her loneliness to her son before he left, he referred to Muriel as her companion.

Now, this did not suit the mother at all. She had a kind heart, but she was not entirely unselfish. She had welcomed Muriel Lestrange tentatively, had lavished money and kindness on her, but with an intent that her young guest should make the Knoll attractive to her son. In this Miss Lestrange had failed, and not only this, but the fact of her being there was a sort of salve to Frank's conscience, so that he would not scruple in the future to roam about as much as he pleased.

When Mrs. Bertram thought over all this the astute matron came to the conclusion that it was a great blessing for her Mr. Stubbs had refused her offer of adopting Muriel, for clearly Miss Lestrange was more hindrance than help to her.

It was a difficult thing to hint to Muriel that she should return to Clapham, particularly as formerly when the girl expressed a fear that her visit was too long she had vigorously overruled all her scruples. Just now when Frank called her his "little sister" and said she was always to stay at the "Knoll," it was still more perplexing.

Some girls are peculiarly sensitive. Muriel, perhaps, from her bringing up and utter loneliness, was of the number. When Frank Bertram was gone, she felt indescribably his mother's manner to her changed. It was kind still, but not tender, endearing, nor loving. There was no longer that complete identification of Muriel with herself which had been one of the chief marks of their intimacy.

Muriel had come to the Knoll a child in heart and feeling. Something was fast changing her into a woman, and she read Mrs. Bertram far better than she would have done six months ago.

"She wanted me to amuse Frank. (She didn't really care for me after all, and now he is gone she would be glad if I went away.)"

The girl had one great comfort in the trouble which otherwise might have crushed her, Mr. Stuart was her friend. The misunderstanding, the reserve, or whatever it was that had separated them, had all melted away. Muriel's happiest time was passed with him. She never bantered him, or laughed at him. She never contradicted, scolded and petted all in a breath as she had done with Frank, but she listened to his voice as though it were sweetest music. She never felt happy away from him, yet always confused when with him; she never raised her blue eye to his face, and yet she loved him.

Muriel was quite aware of her own secret; it

was not unconscious love like that of her sister. Muriel gave her heart as a free gift without thinking of a return. To love made her so happy she did not ask whether she was loved. No two loves could be more different than that of these two sisters.

Muriel loved Charles Stuart because he seemed immeasurably wiser and greater than she was. She felt she should like to cling to him; that his strength would be a support for her weakness. It was a warm, strong love, and would stand many a test, but there was nothing of passion in it; it was steady and enduring, not violent and intense.

I believe myself, such love is the happiest, for the other, if it brings a deeper joy, is more mixed with pain; but alas, for us, we can no more choose our manner of loving than we can whom we will love. Love is divine, and the only law it has is that each true woman feels it once in life.

Mr. Stuart's sprain proved quite as tedious an affair as the doctor had predicted. September had begun and yet there seemed no chance of his being able to join Frank shooting. He did not much regret his enforced inaction, but wondered casually how Bertram got on, and why every letter received from him was always so long after date.

"I wonder if Bertram really is at Norfolk?" flashed across his brain one day; "he never mentions the sport, and altogether his letters are vague. I suppose it was no attachment elsewhere made him blind to Muriel's beauty?"

He dismissed the idea as absurd, but it recurred to him again and again, and at last took such possession of him that he determined, as soon as he could walk without a stick, to go to Norfolk himself.

"Bertram's just the fellow to get into some perplexity," was the lawyer's reflection. "The mere fact of his raving so against unequal marriages proves he's sure to make one."

One morning, when he had limped into the library, he found Mrs. Bertram and Muriel sitting there. Something in the matron's face convinced him their conversation had been a serious one, and he wished himself elsewhere, but she turned to him with a smile and ready greeting. Certainly few women could hide displeasure better than the mistress of the Knoll, yet Charles felt unmistakably relieved when she left the room. He looked then at Muriel. She was sitting at the heavy oaken table, one hand screening her face. She had not spoken once since he entered, and now, as Mrs. Bertram disappeared, he thought he heard a faint sob.

"Muriel!" using her name for the first time in his sympathy, "what is the matter?"

No answer.

"Muriel, will you not tell me your grief?"

She uncovered her face then and tried to smile, but it was a miserable failure.

"Nothing, only I am going away. It is very foolish of me to mind, but I have been so happy here."

"I thought you were going to live with Mrs. Bertram," he said, astonished.

"No. She invited me for a month in April, and I have just gone on staying because she liked to have me, and I was so happy."

"But she likes to have you still."

Muriel shook her head.

"Not in the same way. I asked her myself this morning, and she said my uncle and aunt might want me. I know what that means."

"And your uncle and aunt?" eagerly.

"I'm afraid I don't like them much. You see they are so very good, and I—I think sometimes I must have been born bad."

"I don't think so, Muriel. May I come and see your uncle and aunt? Will you let me come as your friend?"

Despite the sadness at her heart Muriel laughed outright. He visit at Eden House! That piece of elegance sit down in Nehemiah's company to weak tea and thick bread and butter, flavoured with "good words!"

"It's very kind of you to offer, but, oh, Mr. Stuart, you can have no idea what it is. I went past a prison once and I thought I would rather

be a prisoner locked up in there than Uncle Nehemiah's niece."

"Then don't go back to him."

"But I must," said Muriel, with touching simplicity. "I have nowhere else to go."

"Muriel!" said Charles Stuart, looking straight in her clear blue eyes, "will you come to me instead of going to Clapham?"

"To you?"

"Yes. Will you be my darling, the sharer of all my sorrows; the mistress of my house; the sunshine of my life? Will you be all that, little Muriel?"

"But I cannot."

"You can, indeed, if you only will. Muriel, we two both stand alone in the world. We have no one to consult but each other. I will do all that life and strength can to make you happy. I will love you with my whole heart if only you will give yourself to me and be my wife."

"But I am so little and so foolish, Mr. Stuart."

"Do you want to remind me of the years between us?" reproachfully. "Muriel, don't you think love could bridge them over?"

"Perhaps; and," hopefully, "I would do my best to look very old and grown up, and I should be getting older every day."

"Then you will consent, Muriel?"

"No," with sudden recollection; "it seems as if I had been asking you to marry me. I actually told you I had nowhere to go to."

"If you had a hundred places to go to I should want you just the same. I believe I have loved you ever since I saw you."

"I'm sure you couldn't have," said Miss LeStrange, positively. "You were as cross as ever you could be. I don't think you spoke one kind word to me until you sprained your foot."

"Shall I tell you why?"

"Yes," her eyes downcast.

"Because I thought you cared for Frank Bertram."

"Well, so I do," avowed Muriel. "I like him very much indeed."

"I don't mind how many people you like," replied Mr. Stuart. "When you told me Frank had asked you to be his little sister I felt you were free."

"You said you were very glad I was not your sister. I did think that so unkind."

"Shall I say it again, Muriel?"

"If you like."

"It is quite true; I do not want you for my sister, but for my wife."

Deep silence, Muriel playing with the button of her dress, Charles watching her.

"Muriel, won't you answer me? Is it to be Clapham or Blyth Hall?"

"It's no good my saying," returned Muriel, archly. "Uncle Nehemiah would never let me go to Blyth Hall. He'd call it the land of Babylon."

"Leave Uncle Nehemiah to me. Say, Muriel, am I to fight all your battles henceforward?"

And Muriel whispered "Yes."

They sat on quite an hour longer. Not much was spoken, only both felt happy. Muriel had found a rock to lean on, and Charles the bright, glad companion he had longed for. Her face was buried on his shoulder as she faltered:

"Mr. Stuart!"

"I warn you, Muriel, you must begin afresh if you want me to listen to you. You must say 'Charles!'"

"Charles, I want you to do something for me."

"What is it?"

"Don't tell anyone that—"

"That you and I are going to be married? Why, Muriel, do you repent your consent?"

"I don't want Mrs. Bertram to know," faltered the girl. "Of course, really it is nothing to her, only I fancy she would not like it."

Charles understood her meaning perfectly, and promised.

"When are you going back to Clapham, Muriel?"

"Next Monday."

"Then I shall come and beard Uncle Nehe-

miah on Tuesday. Perhaps, when he sees what a cripple I am, he won't be too hard on me."

Muriel drew herself away from her lover. "It is so late," she said, hurriedly. "Mrs. Bertram will wonder where I am."

"Never mind."

"I must go, please."

He drew her close to him; one of his arms encircled her waist, and his lips were pressed to hers in the kiss which sealed their engagement. At such a moment no wonder they did not hear the rustle of a silken train, so Mrs. Bertram had come quite up to them and witnessed the whole episode before they were aware of her presence. Muriel started and blushed, but after that morning's work Charles felt equal to bearing his hostess, however great her anger, and certainly it did not seem slight as she asked:

"Mr. Stuart, what is the meaning of this?"

CHAPTER XV.

A SUMMER FRIEND.

Look now at those tears of sadness,
Down these cheeks of marble hue.

W. HALL.

BEATRICE GREY read Percy Ashley's letter in perfect silence. It was very short, and to one who knew nothing of the man's character might have seemed respectful and even kindly, but the actress put no faith in fair words from the man whom of all others she most scorned.

"DEAR MISS GREY,—It is my painful duty to announce to you the death of my poor brother, which took place this morning at eight o'clock. Reluctant as I am to enter on business matters at such a time, the date of the theatre's re-opening being so near, I must ask you to grant me an interview as soon as possible. I am, with profound admiration, your obedient servant,
"PERCY ASHLEY."

Beatrice read these lines two or three times as though she could not understand them. Then, with a dazed, bewildered look, she handed the note to Mrs. Stone.

"Oh, how dreadful! how shocking! poor dear man!" exclaimed the chaperone as she read the bad news.

This woman who had nothing to gain or lose from George Ashley's hand, could find plenty of regrets for his untimely death, but Beatrice, who owed him all her prosperity, to whom he had been friend, adviser and protector all in one, uttered no word of sorrow.

"What do you think it means?"

Oh, the blessing of commonplace, practical people at times! How one whose feelings are more highly strung envies them their phlegm! Mrs. Stone having paid her tribute of lamentation to the dead manager, was quite ready to look into the future of her companion. With her spectacles poised with precision, and her brow puckered into deep attention, she once more read Percy Ashley's letter.

"I think," she observed, with admirable sagacity, "that Percy Ashley wishes to see you."

"Of course," interrupted Beatrice, impatiently; "but what for?"

The widow objected to be taken up so sharply in the midst of her eloquence. She answered, coldly:

"Probably to arrange whether you continue to hold your present position at his theatre. You were engaged for the run of 'Mona Græme,' you know, my dear, and the new contract is not signed."

There was a little spice of malice in her words. Mrs. Stone had occasionally before now felt a pang of envy at Beatrice's superior worldly circumstances.

Beatrice passed one hand across her fair white brow. She was looking earnestly into the fire. At last she said, simply:

"If the contract had been signed I doubt if it could have been binding after Mr. Ashley's death, and I should not care to be one of Percy

Ashley's company. I must look out for something else."

There was just a touch of weariness in her last words. Remember, for more than two years Beatrice had been spared all pecuniary troubles. When she began her professional career she lived in Guilford Street, and if not rich, yet had sufficient to pay her way. When success came to her she had hired the pretty villa at Kilburn and secured the companionship of Mrs. Stone. She had earned plenty of money in the last year, but she had spent it freely. Probably if she left Myrtle Villa when all her expenses were paid she would have barely two hundred pounds ready money. She spoke of getting "something else," but she was quite aware that most managers had secured their winter companies, and till after Christmas there was little hope of an opening.

"I should stay at the New Theatre if I were you," replied Mrs. Stone, with worldly wisdom. "Percy Ashley's not a good man, but his money is the same as other people's. If you and he quarrel it might be spiting yourselves."

"Nothing will induce me to have anything to do with him."

"Then, my dear, I think you are very unwise. Of course I know you're a favourite actress and that sort of thing, still favourites have slack times now and then, and if you don't go to the New Theatre I really don't see where you are to go."

"We can discuss that another time," said Beatrice, coldly. "I am going to bed now. Good-night."

She did not offer her hand to the chaperone, but swept past her with a stately inclination of her head. "For all the world like a duchess," as Mrs. Stone said afterwards, but the duchess was a woman after all.

When she got upstairs she locked her door and threw herself on her bed in a storm of bitter weeping. It seemed to Beatrice she had lost her best friend, and that she had never valued him half enough.

Mrs. Stone's selfishness hurt her very cruelly. She saw perfectly well that their interests, if one in her prosperity, would be two in her adversity. She felt neither heart nor strength to take up the hard fight of life. What did it matter?—riches or poverty, whichever came—she must bear them alone.

It is this awful sense of loneliness that drives women to the mistakes of their lives. Nearly all women have the dread of loneliness planted in their hearts; to be part of another life; sharer of another's hopes and fears; to have someone always by them; to be desolate no longer, has hurried many a woman into an ill-assorted marriage.

To stand alone requires a great nature, a wide intellect, and a tender heart; without these a single woman degenerates into the type of "old maid," so much spoken against. Beatrice Grey possessed the three qualifications. She was too noble ever to have rushed into marriage for any object save love, but her nobility could not prevent her suffering.

Presently she grew calmer. Her mind was made up: she would see Percy Ashley and quietly refuse to have any connection with his theatre; she would seek another engagement at once, and till this was found, Myrtle Villa must be given up. As it was rented weekly, this would not be difficult; and Mrs. Stone dispensed with.

This decision cost Beatrice a pang. She had all a homefeeling for the house where twelve months of her life had been spent, and she she could not forget who had first come to her there.

Strange that as she laid her head on her pillow her last thought was not of the difficulties of her position, the loss of her friend or the coming visit of Mr. Percy Ashley, but simply:

"Shall I see him to-morrow?"

And "him" with Beatrice meant Frank Bertram. She breakfasted in her own room the next morning, not feeling equal to Mrs. Stone's platitudes. Her meal was sweetened by a letter in the bold masculine hand she knew so well,

from seeing it in books and on songs, although she had never before received a note from Frank Bertram.

There is something strangely dear about a first letter. Beatrice read this one again and again. It was very short and simple—an apology for not calling as he had hoped to do, having been summoned home on business of importance.

"I shall only stay at the Knoll two days," wrote Frank, "and on my return trust to have the pleasure of again seeing you and Mrs. Stone."

"I wonder if he really likes coming here," mused Beatrice; "I think he has forgiven me for being an actress. What can have happened at the Knoll to call him away in such a hurry? I hope his mother is not ill."

Before she went downstairs she wrote to Mr. Percy Ashley, informing him she should be at liberty on the following day. She wrote politely but frigidly, as though to an utter stranger. In fixing the date she had remembered Frank Bertram's words, that he should only be away two days and come and see her on his return. Not for a great deal would she have had her two visitors meet face to face.

She found Mrs. Stone busy reading the obituary notice of Mr. Ashley in the "Times." The ladies greeted each other coolly. Beatrice said at once:

"Mr. Percy Ashley will be here to-morrow, I expect, so we shall not be kept long in suspense."

"I see no suspense," returned the chaperone, mildly, "if you have made up your mind to ruin your prospects—"

"Never mind my prospects, Mrs. Stone. I have quite reconciled myself to them. I shall give up Myrtle Villa and go and live in London. Brompton or Bloomsbury would suit me nicely."

"My dear, they are dreadful places."

"Well, then, I mustn't expect you to come and see me."

Mrs. Stone looked dumbfounded. Whatever she may have said, she had never contemplated a separation from Beatrice. In fact she had only been, according to her lights, using the best arguments to induce her to remain at the New Theatre.

"What on earth are you talking about, Beatrice?"

"Only this," answered the girl, demurely: "as you hold such very gloomy views about my prospects, I cannot possibly ask you to share them."

"You intend to give me notice after my devotion."

"If you choose to put it in those words, yes. In the doubtful state of my prospects as represented by you, I am not justified in retaining a companion, so in a month's time, Mrs. Stone, we will part."

The widow was vexed, disappointed and generally put out. She, too, had received a letter that morning, and her correspondent was Mr. Percy Ashley. Addressing her as the friend of Miss Grey and one who must be interested in her welfare, Mr. Ashley begged her to use her influence to induce the young actress to continue her position at the New Theatre, adding that when once Miss Grey had signed her contract, he should hope Mrs. Stone would accept a handsome cheque for her good offices. The widow was most anxious to earn the cheque. She quite resented her opinion of Mr. Percy, and was ready to think him a most generous man.

Her only difficulty now was to induce Beatrice to hear reason, and this was a hard task.

Beatrice herself seemed quite to have shaken off yesterday's depression. She made no attempt at conversation, but busied herself all the morning at her writing table, and in the afternoon went to London.

(To be Continued.)

A SERIES of drawing-room meetings is being organised to discuss laws affecting women.

A MOUSE STORY.

A GENTLEMAN who was exceedingly averse to that little animal denominated a mouse, was one day travelling in one of the northern counties, and as night set in, put up at a country inn. After dinner and the customary libations "for the good of the house," he retired to his room, carefully examining the corners and crevices to ascertain if there were any holes from which these little marauders might be likely to issue forth, but finding none, he divested himself of his wearing apparel, and consigned himself to the guardian care of Morpheus.

After sleeping soundly for about three hours, he again became conscious of his existence in this world of transitory bliss, but being somewhat in a dreamy state, he had no clear perception as to what might disturb his disordered imagination. As he was thus lying, midway between sleep and consciousness, he heard something going pit-pit-pit-pit upon the table, which closely approximated to the head of the bedstead on which he was sleeping. He listened more attentively, and observed very softly to himself.

"As I live, this house is beset with those infernal mice, and there is one now gnawing at something on the table."

So saying, he slipped as noiselessly out of bed as possible, and feeling for his boot, took hold of the toe part of it, and the heel upraised, very softly approached on tip-toe his intended victim. When close enough to be in striking distance, he again listened, and to his delight found the noise still there; he then raised his arm, and with unerring precision, let fall the heel of his boot upon—his own beautiful gold repeater, that he had placed upon the table on going to bed, that had made the noise, and which now lay smashed and destroyed!

WHIST-PLAYING.

THE following curiosity may be interesting to whist-players:—A certain noble duke, when playing long whist, and being at the point of nine, betted a very large sum that he would win the odd trick, instead of which he lost every one. He held in his own hand (clubs being trumps) king, knave, nine, and seven; ace and king of diamonds; ace, king, queen and knave of hearts; and ace, king, and queen of spades. The right-hand five of the smallest trumps, four spades, and four hearts. The left-hand, ace, queen, ten, and eight of trumps, and the four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, knave, and queen of diamonds. The duke's partner, of course, held the remaining cards. The duke led a trump, which the left-hand wins, and leads a diamond, which his partner trumps, and leads a trump.

WILL BLOOD TELL?

SOME five years ago, Dr. Heitzman announced an important discovery in respect to the anatomy of protoplasm. He claimed that protoplasm of every description invariably contains a network of threads and granules inclosing a fluid, and that the threads and granules constitute the living matter. This view he now asserts has been accepted by more than a dozen of the best microscopists abroad, although it has not yet been recognised in this country; and he makes it the basis of an announcement which, if satisfactorily demonstrated, cannot fail to have a marked and beneficial effect upon the practice of medicine—the announcement that a drop of a man's blood under the microscope will tell just what his condition and constitution may be.

A protracted study of the pus corpuscles in urine, in connection with clinical histories, led Dr. Heitzman to the conclusion that the constitution of a patient could be determined by such examination, the pus corpuscles of a healthy

and strong person containing a greater abundance of living matter than those of a person enfeebled by disease or otherwise. He next extended his investigations to the colourless blood corpuscles, suspecting that by their examination also he might be able to determine the constitution of the individual furnishing the blood. His expectation was verified, he says; an abundance of large granules going with a good constitution.

He frequently noticed that the number of white blood corpuscles was considerably increased after a single sleepless night, so much so that it might be determined whether a man had been kept from his rest or not, by examination of his blood. It could also be determined whether a man was to have acute diseases, or whether he was to suffer from the slow process of disease incident to a strumous diathesis.

A committee of physicians has been appointed to investigate and report on this most promising subject. If it proves possible to determine a man's physical constitution by the examination of a drop of his blood a new field of investigation will be opened, and one having very important practical bearings.—[En.]

REST FOR HEADACHES.

DR. DAY says, in a late lecture: Whatever be the plan of treatment decided upon, rest is the first principle to inculcate in every severe headache. Rest, which the busy man and the anxious mother cannot obtain so long as they can manage to keep about, is one of the first remedies for every headache, and we should never cease to enforce it. The brain, when excited, as much needs quiet and repose as a fractured limb or an inflamed eye, and it is obvious that the chances of shortening the seizure and arresting the pain will depend on our power to have this carried out effectually. It is a practical lesson to be kept steadily in view, in that there may lurk behind a simple headache some lesion of unknown magnitude which may remain stationary if quietude can be maintained.

There is a point worth attending to in the treatment of all headache. See that the head is elevated at night, and the pillow hard; for, if it be soft, the head sinks into it and becomes hot, which with some people is enough to provoke an attack in the morning if sleep has been long and heavy.

A NEW TEA.

THE cup that cheers but not inebriates is threatened with a rival possessing properties which must render it first favourite amongst the fair sex. The produce of the Ilex Paraguaysensis, Maté, or Paraguay tea, has often been suggested as a substitute for the more orthodox infusion of the leaves of the Thea, or tea-plant, but this would stand no chance in competition with the new candidate for public favour. Paris, it is said, has just awoke to the virtues of "a new kind of tea," called Serkys tea, "which has the virtue of preserving the brilliancy and beauty of early youth up to the ripest age;" it is composed "of exquisitely refreshing and balsamic plants"—the leaves of the plant are probably intended—"growing on the foot of the mountains of Mecca and Libanus."

The beverage in question claims an antiquity greater than that of the modern tea whose name it borrows. It is said to have been discovered in the time of Osman I., who introduced it to the ladies of his seraglio, and it has ever since remained the favourite beverage of the Sultanas. In outward application its effects are as marvellous as when taken internally, and the leaves stewed down after infusion, if thrown into the bath, will contribute to preserve the freshness of the complexion.

Serkys, whatever it may be, will no doubt become the rage in Paris, where its virtues are,

we are told, devoutly believed in. There is only one little difficulty in the matter, and that is that the wonderful properties of the drink should ever have been forgotten when once known, as Serkys is said to have been familiar to the ladies of the French court. "In France it was known during the reign of Louis XIV., and perhaps it was owing to this preparation that all the women of that period were young and beautiful!"

FRINGED WITH FIRE.

By the Author of "Bound to the Trawl," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. VERE IS THWARTED.

For reigns ambition in bold man alone;
Soft female hearts the rude invader own.

YOUNG.

WHEN Rosalind Vere broke away from Lord Rookford, refusing further to listen to his suit, she hurried to her own room, locked the door, and then sat down to think.

For the first time in her life she was proud of herself. She, who had looked upon her profession as a disgrace, as a thing to be ashamed of, and not to be pursued except with the feeling of conscious humiliation, had been sought as the wife of an English nobleman.

Over and over again she repeated the words, "His wife," and a thrill of happiness warmed her heart as she murmured the words, even while she knew she had put the intoxicating temptation away from her.

The appreciation of others always gives us a value in our own eyes which we had not previously possessed, and Rosalind now felt she could respect herself more thoroughly than she had ever done before, and that, thus armed with the consciousness of her own worthiness, she could walk safely along the dangerous path upon which destiny had thrown her.

Not that the glaring pitfalls that lie in the way of a young and beautiful woman who adopts the stage as her means of livelihood had ever in any way influenced or even threatened this girl. She was too cold, too proud, too painfully conscious of the value of hard-earned money, and of the dire necessity for earning it, to let her vanity, still less her heart, be touched by empty professions of admiration, or more insulting offers of material wealth and shameful prosperity.

A woman's character, particularly when her profession is a public one, soon becomes known, and by the time we first met her, Rosalind Vere had been on the stage a full year, and during that period her coldness and prudence had almost become a byword.

But offers of marriage even to a young and lovely woman do not come every day, and Rosalind had never dreamed in her wildest flights of fancy of such a brilliant destiny being offered to her as she had this day unhesitatingly refused.

Do not think her Quixotic, or in any degree unworlthy, for she was nothing of the kind, and had Rookford been a much older man than he really was, or had she been indifferent to him, she would, when he proposed, supposing her heart to have been free, have accepted him upon the spot.

But she loved him. For months past she had been trying to hide this fact from her own heart; she loved him, and, as she had said, she loved him far too well, far too devotedly to bring disappointment or possible disgrace upon him.

She never had entertained the remotest hope of marrying him, so she does not now give way to despair. That may come later, probably it will; at the present moment, the consciousness that he has asked her, that he has thought her

worthy to share his name and high position, acts like an intoxicating stimulant upon her and reconciles her more completely than anything else could have done, to the distasteful career fate has thrust upon her.

"Yes, I will be really great yet," she said, rising to her feet and standing before the mirror while her breast swelled proudly. "I am no idiot," she went on, "though I have despised everything but what would just make money for the time. But I am not too old to learn, and Babbington told me but the other day that I have fine histrionic and elocutionary powers. Well, he shall have the chance of cultivating them as he wanted to do. It will be hard work, but with such an incentive to success I could not fail, and it will be work, too, for mind as well as body, and I must work hard and keep myself always employed; I must not eat my heart away by longing after the impossible, for it is impossible—now, at any rate."

A tap at the door, and the sound of her stepmother's voice caused her to open it.

"Is he gone?" she asked, nervously.

"Yes; some time ago," was the grave reply; "but why did you send him away, Rosie. You will never have such a chance again."

"Possibly not, mamma, but I felt as though I should be taking a mean advantage of him if I accepted his offer. And he has a mother and father, you know; if they were willing to receive me I might think seriously about it."

"Then why didn't you tell him so?"

"I don't know. He took me by surprise; but don't let us talk any more about him now. I have formed a resolution, I am going in for the legitimate drama. I shall begin training, studying I should say, under Mr. Babbington to-morrow; you know I have gone through the preliminary courses in the Lycée in Paris."

"But the hard work, my child?"

"That is nothing; I like hard work. And I can't tell you how glad I am that you made the suggestion you did about my salary, because it removes my principal difficulty, the want of money. I am only amused to imagine the fury papa will be in when he finds it out. Hark! What is that?"

The sound in question was caused by the violent banging of the front door, and a man's heavy footstep stamping up the stairs.

"He knows," said Mrs. Vere in some dismay; "now for a scene. I hope you are strong enough to bear it."

And she herself sank upon a chair.

Rosalind made no reply. She hated to be bothered about money matters, and thus it was that her father had obtained such a complete control over her salary, and perhaps under ordinary circumstances when the tug of war came she would not have fought against him.

But her new plans, her new-born ambition required money, and she was too intent upon carrying them out to hesitate now as to the course she would pursue.

"What! What—what is the meaning of your interference with my arrangements?" Mr. Vere demanded furiously, as he came into the room, his puckered face red as that of a turkey cock, and his eyes blazing.

Rosalind slightly shrugged her shoulders as she asked:

"What are you so hot about, papa? Who has interfered with your arrangements?"

"You! that woman; both of you. How dare you? Sit down and write a letter and retract it at once. I demand it; I insist upon it."

"Retract what, papa?"

"The order you gave at the theatre to-day; they refused to let me have a paltry five pounds on account, and said they were instructed to pay you and you only in future."

"Quite right, papa, I did give those orders and I meant what I said."

"Why? And how dared you do it?"

"I don't think it required much daring," with a calm smile; "when I talked last night of leaving the stage, you reminded me that I was bound by agreement with Mr. Newton to remain two years longer. This being the case I thought I might as well have the command of my own salary during that time, and

as you have taken fifteen pounds a week on my behalf for the last year; you must have plenty of money by this time to enable you to carry out some kind of business; more than that, I shall no longer be a tie upon your time."

"Plenty of money!" repeated the old man, bitterly. "I have not a pound in the world; not one."

"Then what have you done with it?" in surprise.

"What have I done with it," bitterly; "lost it in trying to make my fortune and yours; and now I am a poor, helpless old man. Ah, well! I will go hang myself—I will go hang!"

Unfortunately for the force of this threat, it had been made on an average at least half a dozen times a week during the last ten years, and sometimes quite as often in the course of one day, and thus, as familiarity breeds contempt, Mrs. Vere's wife and daughter paid no further heed to it on this occasion than so far as to make Rosalind say, laughingly:

"Settle all your affairs before you do that, papa, and if what you implied last night is true, and I am not your child, you might, at least, let us know who and what I am."

"You are baseborn," exclaimed the little man, turning round upon the astonished woman in fury, "a nameless foundling, and no child of mine. I hate—I detest—I loathe you; never call me father again."

And wild, defeated, and reckless, he darted down the stairs and out into the garden. The smile had left Rosalind's face. She had not meant to be disrespectful, and she would have given the man she had called her father any reasonable sum of money for his own expenses, but that he should have yielded to such a fury of passion and have flung such cruel taunts at her, made her face turn pale, and her eyes dilate with horror, and she asked, in wonder, of Mrs. Vere:

"Can it be true?"

"No, I don't believe it is," stoutly. "What his motive is for saying such a thing I can't imagine, but I do not believe it; positively I do not."

"I wish I had been your child," said the girl, wistfully. "I never knew my own mother; for you know she died soon after Emma was born, and then, Victor is older than I: No, it can't be true."

"Of course it can't; it is some new falsehood he has invented to worry us; but I have tried to be a mother to you, Rosalind."

"And you have succeeded, dear—quite succeeded," with an embrace; "but let us forget about papa. I thought it was champagne that had made him so strange last night, but I am beginning to think his mind is affected. Dear me, how the time has slipped on. I will write a note to Babington at once. I don't suppose papa has used the rope he has talked of so long, but you might as well go and look after him, mamma."

Mrs. Vere took the hint, though she had no anxiety upon her husband's account. She knew the selfish, heartless, mean-spirited scoundrel too well.

Nor had she misjudged him, for, on reaching the pretty room which led out upon the lawn and garden, she saw her lord and master sitting in the same chair that Rosalind had occupied under the shadow of the tent when Lord Rookford had spoken to her.

Mr. Vere, however, had improved the occasion, for while he thus sat wiping his face and head, which were still red and hot, his youngest daughter was standing by his side with a claret jug in her hand pouring him out some of the cooling beverage, of which it was evident he had already drained one glass.

"Ah! That is his way of hanging himself," said his wife, bitterly, "we may all slave and starve, if he can but enjoy life. But he is hatching mischief, I am sure; that stupid Susan is telling him something. Good gracious, what is it?"

Well might she ask the question, for Mr. Vere had sprung to his feet, embraced his daughter, to the imminent danger of the claret cup, and was dancing about more like an ex-

cited mountebank than a staid old man of six and sixty.

"My dear, let me embrace you! I lose my temper, it is true; but ah! bah! I love my wife and my children, and the divine Rosalind a peeress—I, the father-in-law of a peer! we shall be rich, we shall be great, we shall be happy! We will go to his castle, we will ride in his carriages; oh, it is too, too much!"

"It is," replied his wife, drily and sternly, "for she has refused him."

"Refused! Ah! bah! that is her coquetry; but it is dangerous; dangerous. Coronets come not every day; why did you allow it, why did you not make her accept him, and at once?"

"Vere Maloney"—his wife always addressed him like this when she wished to impress him or to be specially disagreeable, "if you ever speak to Rosalind as you did just now, and if you behave in such a maniacal way as you are now doing, both Rosalind and I will leave you, and you may shift for yourself for the rest of your life. I mean it," she added, positively. "I don't know if she will ever forgive you."

"Forgive! It is I who should be prayed to forgive," with some of his old bombast; "what does she mean by ordering the treasurer not to pay me?"

"She objected to her money being squandered, and I think she is right."

"You do, do you; perhaps you put it into her head to insult her own father?"

"You said just now that you were not her father."

"Never mind what I said, it is what I say now: where am I to get money?"

"Earn it. You have board and lodging for nothing; but I told you I would put a stop to your gambling and I will," firmly.

"Will you," in a taunting tone; "perhaps you will keep me from borrowing money too?"

"I need not attempt that, for nobody would lend you a franc when they learn that the house is not yours or any of the furniture in it," returned the wife with a sneer.

"Lovers are not always careful about security," grinned her husband, "and what is the use of a pretty and celebrated daughter if one does not utilise some of her admirers. I have refrained from using this resource hitherto, but if she does not write the letter to Newton telling him things are to be as they were before, I will do it, I swear I will."

"I don't doubt you," with withering contempt; "and in self-defence I think I shall advise her to assume that she is not your daughter and act accordingly."

"You are mad!" exclaimed the little man; frantically; "if the whole is found out I may be sent to penal servitude—I."

"That will be a very convenient way of getting rid of you. But listen to me and let us have no more of your mad behaviour; Vere Maloney. If you conduct yourself with common decency, you will be well taken care of; if not you will be left to drift into extreme poverty or worse; and as for obtaining the control of Rosalind's income again you never will."

Then she left him; her daughter had gone in to the house some time before.

But, though she gave this warning Mrs. Vere had very little expectation of its being attended to, and long and bitter experience had taught her that her husband's capacity for borrowing was only equalled by his ability to live happily under a load of debt.

Resolved that he should not utilise Viscount Rookford, however, the now determined woman wrote a note to his lordship, begging as a favour to herself that if her husband should take the liberty of wanting to borrow or beg of him, he would positively refuse him the least assistance, "for he does not need it, my lord," she continued. "Thanks to the generosity of our child, we have been spared some of the consequences which a gambler brings upon his family, and it would be a mistaken kindness on the part of any friend of hers to give him the means of indulging in his favourite vice."

"There," she thought, when she had signed, sealed and directed this epistle, "I don't think Vere can do much for himself in that quarter,

and at any rate, Rosalind cannot be compromised."

That night Rosalind Vere danced as she had never danced before throughout the whole course of her life.

Her heart was full of love and of the consciousness of being loved; it seemed like some divine music floating in her soul, and as though in sympathy with this ecstatic harmony, her body seemed the very incarnation of the poetry and soft undulating grace of motion.

Scarcely did her feet appear to touch the ground that they passed over; her dance was like a lulling melody; there was no strain or effort in it, no jumps and twists and turns and contortions, it was all as simple and natural and fascinating as an old English ballad, sung by one of the first and greatest of singers, and every breath was hushed, every eye strained until with a graceful bound she disappeared behind one of the wings.

Then the applause burst out and she had to appear again and again, while bouquets of flowers with many a costly present tied up with them, were thrown at her feet.

Once only that night had she glanced at Lord Rookford's box.

It was empty and she felt grateful that it was so. This night she would not have liked him even to witness her triumph, for what was her daily work to her; would perhaps have seemed like a mockery to him.

The manager, proud of her success, which put so many golden coins into his own pocket, complimented her and begged that Mrs. Vere would accept the use of his brougham to take them home. "That is," he added, "if your own is not here."

His offer was accepted; and the hint was taken also. The Veres did not buy a brougham, but they hired one, and though they now indulged in many little luxuries they had previously abstained from, there was nevertheless a very fair portion of Rosalind's income set aside as a provision for herself and family against a rainy day.

The morning after her double triumph Rosalind received a letter from Lord Rookford. It was very earnest, tender and impassioned; and heaven spoke hopefully of obtaining the consent of his father to his union with her if she made that a condition, and would promise to marry him if that consent were gained. He ended with the declaration that no woman but herself should ever be his wife.

How she kissed that letter and pressed it to her bosom, and thought of the noble and manly fellow who had written it, and echoed in her own heart the vow it contained, that she on her part would never be the wife of any living man but Jack Chester, Viscount Rookford.

But though she was so tender and gentle in reading his effusion she was by no means gushing in the answer; on the contrary, her note seemed almost cold in comparison with the one it was a reply to. It ran as follows:

"DEAR LORD ROOKFORD,

"When you can prove to me that what you desire will be a blessing and not a curse to you—when you can convince me that it will produce no division in your family, and that your union with me will bring any lasting and material benefit to you, then I will remember the admission I made and reconsider the answer I gave you; but until then, for your sake and for my own, I repeat, we must be strangers."

"ROSALIND."

That was all, but there was comfort in this letter. Not that the conditions were ever likely to be complied with, but there was the admission in it that she loved him, and this was balm to his wounded and disappointed feelings.

"The material benefit was a very improbable thing," he told himself, "but his father's consent might be gained; and then, what more could she reasonably desire?"

Then he determined to go and see his cousin Arthur Wardour, and take counsel with him. And meanwhile Rosalind went off to take her

first dramatic reading with Mr. Babbington. The determination to achieve a position on the stage by her own talent and abilities, and not merely by her personal grace and beauty, and by her perfect command of well-trained limbs and muscles, had taken possession of her heart with the knowledge that Lord Rookford wished to marry her.

It seemed to her, with her limited and cramped knowledge of the world, as though, by this resolve, she were taking a step higher in the social scale, rising a little nearer to his level, making the great gulf between them a trifle narrower, and she worked on early and late, without pause or flagging—worked, as no human being could have done, without a great hope to give inspiration, without a noble and definite purpose to give courage.

CHAPTER XIX.

A SECRET TO SELL.

The last of gold, unfeeling and remorseless,
The last corruption of degenerate man.

JOHNSON.

"It is surprising how very prudent and worldly-wise we can be on behalf of other people, and what egregious idiots we can make of ourselves."

Such was Viscount Rookford's mental comment as he sat in Arthur Wadour's handsome chambers in the Temple, with the windows thrown wide open and commanding a wide view of the gardens, the embankment, and the river.

The young nobleman had just been telling his cousin about his love for Rosalind and had been met by as many wise and prudent maxims as his own father could have given him. But Rookford was not a man to be easily put out of temper, and he asked, with a smile lurking round the corners of his mouth:

"Then you think love is a fiction, a delusion and a snare? Is that the creed you would have me believe and practice?"

Arthur laughed heartily as he said:

"You think me scarcely qualified to preach such a doctrine, I suppose?"

"Well, no; except on the principle of 'do as I say, not as I do,' but that reminds me, I saw Miss Edgcome in Worcester."

"You did?" eagerly. "What did she say? How did she look?"

"She didn't say much, there was no opportunity, but she looked charming. Of course you expected me to say that?"

"No," slowly. "I am satisfied with her, and I like others to admire her. If your Rosalind were anything like my Florence I could understand your infatuation."

"Well, I am happy to say she isn't," with a laugh.

"If she were anything but an actress," said Arthur, doubtfully, "it would not seem so objectionable."

"I don't see why. I shan't be the first son of a peer who has married an actress, nor shall I be the last. Why, half the noble families in England have stage blood in their veins."

"Yes, that is true, but your father will never consent, and you say the girl won't marry you unless he does."

"That is the present condition of affairs, but I don't despair of either or both of them yielding to my importunity; but now about yourself? How are you getting on?"

"Oh, pretty well; it is slow and dry work; but by-the-way, did you meet a fellow named Rentroll down in Worcester?"

"No; why? Who is he?"

"A man of independent means. Florence has mentioned him in her letters as an old friend, but my mother and one or two more kind friends have been writing and telling me she had once been engaged to him; and that he is now a constant visitor at the Edgcome's house trying to regain his old footing. I can scarcely believe it. Florence would have been sure to have told me."

"Of course she would, and that reminds me that her cousin Judith Henen, who with her

mother is now staying with your people, gave me a message to deliver to you."

"Ah! What is it?"

"That you are not to believe anything that Florence does not tell you herself, for your mother and Mrs. Henen were plotting to make mischief between you, and if you are credulous they will succeed."

"How mean and contemptible," exclaimed the young man, bitterly; "it is surprising to see what pitiful depths a woman will descend to, if by doing so she can but get her own way."

"I don't think the sexes differ much on that point; besides you should make the assertion individual, and not be so sweeping in your denunciations of a whole sex; but I am thinking of going down to Worcestershire again soon, if my people don't come to town; they seem to be a very long while in getting their house ready for occupation."

"Let me know if you decide to go, perhaps I'll accompany you. I should like to see Florence. I don't feel quite comfortable about her."

"Nonsense; surely you're not jealous; but I shall be glad of your company. What are you going to do with yourself for the rest of the day?"

"As usual," with a shrug.

"Come with me and we'll dine together. By the way, your mother gives a dinner party to-day."

"Indeed; to whom?"

Rookford told him, then they fell to discussing some of the guests, Cyril Champerne and Mary Landsdale becoming their principal topics.

"I hope she won't marry him," said Arthur.

"He isn't good enough for her."

"He probably would not agree with you on that point," laughed the Viscount; "but I never saw a man more intensely eager to get on in the world than he is."

"He shows his eagerness too plainly," assented Arthur; "but come, shall we go westward?"

Rookford acquiesced and the two cousins, arm in arm, were soon walking down the Strand.

"Who is that queer-looking little old man?" asked Arthur, directing his companion's attention to a wizened, swaggering little figure, attired in a very dandified style, and yet, by the way in which he kept dodging backwards and forwards and trying to attract Rookford's attention, suggesting the idea that there was something shabby about him.

"Oh, it is somebody who wants to borrow money of me," laughed the young man as he nodded to Mr. Vere and then politely ignored him. But he was annoyed, though he treated it slightly. He would have given the man some money with pleasure, but the wife's letter had put the disagreeable necessity upon him of refusing to comply with any request that might be made upon the subject, and saying "No" was always painful to Lord Rookford; he was therefore above all things anxious to avoid meeting the old man.

But Mr. Vere was not to be so easily got rid of. His anger against his wife and Rosalind was great, but his need of money was still greater. Fortune, he was sure, must soon turn and smile upon him if only he had a little more gold to tempt her favours with, while besides his desire for play and his greed for the means of pursuing the game of chance, there were two or three "debts of honour" which he had already incurred, never dreaming that his large income—or rather his daughter's—was not inexhaustible, consequently the sudden suspension of this had left him like a sick man who has been well propped up on every side, but whose supports having suddenly given way, leave him tottering, shaking in every limb, and ready to fall unless some friendly hand come to his aid.

Unfortunately for Mr. Vere and those belonging to him, the fall was likely to be moral rather than physical, and though the descent, whatever it was, could not be very great, he was becoming reckless enough to throw himself into any mire, provided he could drag out some golden coins from its impure depths.

Had this condition of things come upon him some six months after his daughter's salary had been withheld from him, there might have been some slight excuse for the man, but it must be remembered that only the previous Saturday he had drawn her money, and had spent the greater part of it already, therefore he could only blame himself for the straits he was in.

Not that he did blame himself—what gambler ever does? It was his misfortune, his bad luck, the fault of everybody but himself, and he anathematised his wife and Rosalind in terms so strong and insulting, that Monsieur de Vitre, who occupied part of the house and paid the whole rent of it, threatened to have him kicked out if he did not behave in a more respectable manner.

A word about this old Frenchman. He was an author, an exile, rich and eccentric, with a great aversion to his own species; he had in his youthful days known something of Mrs. Vere's father, and meeting her before Rosalind's success in her profession was so well assured as it now was he had offered to take a house in which the Veres should reside rent free, on condition that he had certain rooms in it for himself, that he was never spoken to or intruded upon in any way unless he himself requested it, but that his bell, when he rang, should be answered immediately.

The proposal was accepted, and both parties had been well satisfied with the result, but the day following Lord Rookford's visit, Mr. Vere had burst out again so violently, that the Frenchman and real tenant of the house had found it necessary to interfere.

It was after this that Mr. Vere had been to Rookford's chambers, had failed to find him, and then, remembering some one whose place of business was in the Strand, and who he thought would lend him a few pounds, he had gone to his office to see what could be done.

He was not successful, however, and was walking back very despondently when he caught sight of Rookford and his companion and determined to waylay the former or follow him.

"He doesn't mean to speak," muttered the little man; "deuced bad form to serve his future father-in-law in this manner. I wonder if it would be worth anything, if he would pay to learn what I can tell him. He might rather pay me to hold my tongue; who knows—who cares, provided I get money. It's a secret worth something to somebody or I shouldn't have been paid so much to remain silent. I'll have money somehow or other, whatever it costs me or other people, and if Rosalind is not profitable to me in one way, she shall be in another. Else why did I take her? Why did I burden myself with such a load?"

He forgot, or he chose to forget, that the girl never had been a burden to him, but that because she was the brightest and cleverest and the most industrious, she had been made to bear the burden of others, made to earn money by dancing, and by embroidery, while he swagged about, ate his dinner, and was, what a small servant girl had once called him, "a make-believe gentleman."

The two young men sauntered along Pall Mall, up St. James's Street, and turned into a club, Vere keeping close upon their track. Even his audacity was scarcely sufficient to make him go up and take Rookford by the arm and prefer his request then and there, nor could he very well enter the club and ask for him as he did not know whether it was he or his companion that was a member.

He waited for more than an hour outside the building, but neither of the young men reappeared, then he determined to write a note and send it in to Lord Rookford.

To do this he had to go up to Piccadilly to a public-house, where he spent so much time in concocting his epistle that when he returned to the club, he was informed that his lordship was not there.

"But he's a member, isn't he?" he inquired, thinking he would leave the letter it had cost him so much time and trouble to write.

"No," was the reply.



[FOILED.]

"But I saw him come in here an hour and a half ago."
 "That may be, sir; he came in with a member."

And the man turned away, thus giving Vere to understand that it was time for him to be gone.

The day was drawing to its close; it was eight o'clock, and his wife would have gone to the theatre by this time.

How odd it seemed to him not to have to go with the girl and kick his heels in the green-room and get in the way of everybody behind the scenes. It seemed to him as though he had been part of the stage properties, as though the performance could not go on without him, and now, instinctively, having been defeated elsewhere, he turned in the direction of the "Fantastic."

The door-keeper knew his face and admitted him, and the little man made his way to a secluded corner at the very back of the dress-circle, where he believed Rosalind would not see him. He was a very miserable old man. He had forgotten his dinner. He was absorbed by the one craving desire for money with which to win back some of what he had lost, and the intense selfishness of his nature, divested now of any cloak wherewith to cover it, made him, even to his own detriment, indifferent to the pain and suffering, and even to the wrong and disgrace, he brought upon others, provided he could, even temporarily, obtain the gratification of his own evil desires.

Thus he sat for a long time; how long he could not tell, having no watch with him, when he gave a sudden start as he saw the curtains in Lord Rookford's box drawn aside, and assured himself eagerly that the young man was alone. To make his way round there and to wait with what patience he could till the deafening applause told him that Rosalind's part of the performance was over, was his next step, and he stood outside the box door watching for his intended victim.

"Good-evening, Mr. Vere," Rookford said, as he came out, and he was passing on, when the little man stopped him, breathlessly, saying, "Excuse me, my lord; excuse me."

Then he preferred his request.

"Twenty pounds, my lord; only twenty pounds for a week."

But for Mrs. Vere's letter Rookford would have given it to him, or five times as much, just because he was Rosalind's father. Now, he said, as carelessly as he could:

"I am sorry, Mr. Vere, to refuse you such a trifle, but I long ago laid the advice to heart that Laertes received from his father—'Neither a borrower nor a lender be,' and you would not, I am sure, ask me to break through my rule. Good-night."

But as he passed on the thin small hand of the little man clutched his arm, and his voice seemed to hiss:

"If you won't lend, will you buy, my lord? I have a secret to sell that concerns her."

"That concerns Rosalind?"

"Yes; concerns her deeply."

"I don't know; this is not the place to discuss such matters in; come to me in the morning."

"No, now my lord; to-night; I—I may change my mind in the morning."

"Very well," and together they walked out into the soft night air.

Suddenly Lord Rookford stopped and seized his companion somewhat roughly by the arm as he said, like one in a dream:

"You said you had a secret to sell concerning your daughter; is it to betray her in any way? To attempt to allege anything against her? Because if so I won't listen to you, I won't believe it; and if you were not an old man and her father I would thrash you to within an inch of your life for trying to malign her."

"Indeed no my lord, it is not so,"—he was an arrant coward as most blusterers are—"it is nothing that Rosalind knows of or could have any control over; it is something concerning her

birth that I will tell you—if—if, you make it worth my while."

"Ah! She had a twin sister, one so like her that I could not distinguish them apart?"

"I don't know, my lord."

"You don't know," repeated the young man; "why it's the same answer that Cousins gave me."

"I don't know anything about Cousins; I want money, I have something to sell; are you likely to become a purchaser, my lord?"

"More likely than anyone else if it is worth anything to Rosalind, for if it concerns her it will be valuable to me. But why?" another phase of the matter suddenly occurring to him, "should you think of selling any secret that concerns your own daughter?"

"She is not my daughter and she has forbidden the people at the theatre to pay to me her salary," was the reply. "Now I shall tell you no more until we have come to terms."

If Mr. Vere had only known it, he was within an ace of measuring his short stature in the gutter, for even while a throb of intense relief filled the young man's heart to think that the lady of his love did not belong to such a pitiful cur, he felt as though he could kick and trample upon the wretch who evidently thought only of her as he would of a sponge—something to be squeezed or sold.

But he restrained the inclination. It was just possible he told himself that he might learn something that would lessen the difference in social standing, that now lay between himself and Rosalind; something that would make his father's consent a probability, which it certainly was not at present.

Yes, undoubtedly the information to be gained would be valuable to him, how valuable he could not at present imagine; it would be like a two-edged sword; rather perhaps I should say, like a lancet, so sharp on both sides that it is apt to cut the unskilled hand that uses it.

(To be Continued.)



[SELF SLAIN.]

LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS.

CHAPTER XL.

HER LAST VICTIM.

Come join hands with hope, and be
Linked no more to misery.

DR. MOSELEY, carrying the lifeless form of Meredith in his arms, entered a small room at the left hand corner of the hall, followed by Lady Violet, who appeared unfeignedly terrified at this fearful discovery.

Her breast heaved with uncontrollable agitation, and her deadly pallor testified to her mental tremors. The shock of finding Lionel Hargrave, the enemy she had endeavoured to ruin and destroy, under the garb of a foreign baron, almost paralysed her speech and energy. For he might resolve to take summary proceedings against the earl and Dr. Moseley, more especially if Constance had at last fallen a victim to Meredith's jealousy.

No words passed between herself and Dr. Moseley for a few brief seconds; he was engaged in a careful examination of the body, but at last he spoke in a whisper:

"There is not the faintest hope of saving this woman's life. She has been dead at least two hours."

Lady Violet shivered, and came closer to him.

"Quite dead? What an awful end, so fierce and sudden. Do you think there is a chance of Constance's life being spared?"

Dr. Moseley dropped his voice into a still lower key as he said:

"Yes; my opinion most decidedly is favourable in that respect. I fancy Nature came to her aid, and a great portion of the poison has been rejected ere it had time to be absorbed in the system."

"Listen!" cried Lady Violet, stepping into

the hall. "I hear voices. Dr. Norton has now arrived with Sir Hugh."

"This affair of Lionel Hargrave will put us in a most awkward position," said Dr. Moseley, rising and going towards the door; "he's checkmated us at last, no mistake about that."

"And I actually told him he was the heir to the Allerton estates, thinking he was the Baron," added Lady Violet, reflectively. "Hugh helping him all the time in the plot. A very nice scheme indeed, and worthy of an Allerton."

"It makes me think it about time I withdrew from the scene," said Dr. Moseley, who was a thorough coward, and shrank from any further encounter with Lionel, "or gad! the landscape gardener will be putting a bullet in my brain this time instead of my arm, and a man with a nice, snug little investment in the five per cents. representing a princely income, can't afford to be made a target of for any side shots. I—I think I'll take a glass of brandy and stroll over the lawn towards the garden gate."

He turned and saw Lady Violet in tears. Beauty in distress was here too much for Dr. Moseley. He found it quite impossible to leave at that moment.

"José," murmured Lady Violet, "can you talk of going away under such circumstances as these?"

"I wished to make it less unpleasant for the earl and yourself, dearest," he answered; "the effect of my personality on this hare-brained young man is similar to that of flourishing a red flag before a bull; but if you wish me to remain, my Violet, I will stay at the risk of Hargrave laying a razor across my throat."

He resigned himself with heroic courage. Lady Violet still wept.

"My nerves cannot stand any more horror," she cried, wringing her hands. "Look at the fate of this miserable woman before us; it was jealousy led to this fearful tragedy, and now if Constance should die!"

"She will not die," said Dr. Moseley, more cheerfully; "suppose you just go to the dining-

room door and inquire how she is. I must attend to your father, who is now in the library, but send the brandy, he requires it. These severe shocks sometimes end fatally," he added, with his funeral air, "and the earl must be seen to at once."

"You will not abandon us, José, till more is known?"

José looked longingly at the garden gate, and then at his light boots. The dews were rising; the park was damp; Lionel was dangerous, but he hated wet feet; besides, he was in love with a young and beautiful woman. He reflected dismally it only needed the arrival of Tessa to complete his discomfiture.

And then it occurred to Dr. Moseley that if he could induce Lady Violet to make up her mind to taking one desperate and irrevocable step to-night, which would, he believed, be not repulsive to her impetuous nature, he should escape all.

He dreaded Lionel's anger and vengeance, and he hated Tessa—a cold, inflexible hatred that years could only deepen and increase.

Meanwhile Lady Violet re-entered the dining-room, and spoke re-assuringly to her guests, apologising for her "attack of the nerves," and begging them to remain a little longer, approached Sir Hugh, who was bending over Lady Constance in anxious eagerness.

Lionel still knelt by her side, while Dr. Norton, who had written out a prescription, ordered her to be taken to her room at once, and everything kept in perfect quietude around her.

"Lady Constance will live?" she asked.

"Thank Heaven, yes!" cried Lionel, grasping his brother's hand; "the crisis is over, my darling will be restored to me."

"Hugh," continued Lady Violet, severely, "I have something to say to you; having forced a mean and cruel deception on us, it is needless to say I dismiss you. We do not wish in future to be insulted by either you or—your brother. Leave the Hall at once!"

"Better keep your temper, Vi," her old lover

remarked, "deuced bad form, 'pon honour, to talk like that, all things considered."

"You will have to answer to me for your crime, Lady Violet," Lionel now said, in his quiet voice. "The Earl, Dr. Moseley and yourself shall be all indicted for a wilful conspiracy, perjury—"

"I knew he meant it," cried the wretched Moseley, hovering outside, "and the only thing that will save us is an elopement, and this very night, or, by heaven! the detectives will be on to me—Tessa turn traitor, as she's often threatened when I've knocked her down more often than she appreciates, and I shall be called 'Prisoner at the bar,' there will be that dreadful paragraph which lends itself so readily to criminal description—Dr. Moseley, a man of gentlemanly bearing, &c. Whereas abroad I will purchase a title; we will live in Spain for a time, till all has blown over."

"Before dealing with us, Sir Lionel Allerton, in this summary manner, better look at home," said Lady Violet. "You have treated a miserable human being to self-destruction. Meredith loved you to madness!"

"Oh! they all do that," muttered the doctor, "women, ever in extremes, are bound to stake their every hope of earthly happiness on some blockhead's smiles. Loved him to madness! What can they see in the fellow to be all dying for him in this way? Handsome! Oh! yes, and honourable too—that's a mystery. They generally prefer sticking to villains, with the unconquerable obstinacy of the sea."

"Meredith, I say, loved you with the desperate fierceness of which only a like nature is capable. You forsook her with a baseness only men can be capable of; you disregarded her entreaties, her menaces and her despair. I know what her sufferings were; you ruined her life, and you are now her murderer."

She swept from him with angry vehemence, and rushing to the library, to the astonishment of the earl, who was reviving under Dr. Moseley's stimulants and treatment, burst into a violent flood of tears. Lionel carried his wife to a bedroom on the first corridor, the doctor and Sir Hugh following.

"She will live," the doctor was saying, his hand on her pulse; "the nausea which seized her ere she fainted has been her salvation."

"Are you still in pain, my darling?" her husband asked, as she opened her eyes.

Lady Constance stretched out her hand.

"No, Lionel; are you there? It has seemed like a fearful dream. She poisoned the coffee, Lionel, and gave it me to drink. She witnessed our meeting and resolved to kill me."

"Hush, dearest; do not excite yourself to speak at all yet. You are much too weak and ill."

She sunk back on the pillow again with a sweet smile of infinite content, while Dr. Norton darkened the window, and soon withdrew with Sir Hugh, leaving Lionel by her side. He pressed his lips to hers in a supreme burst of thankful joy, and grateful prayers ascended to Heaven for her recovery, and soon he had the happiness of finding she had sunk into a peaceful sleep, and this was what the doctor had especially desired as most conducive to her restoration.

He rang for one of the housemaids to remain in the room while he descended. He wished to understand more of the facts regarding Meredith, and as Lady Constance's danger was nearly over, she could be left with safety.

"Mind, you call me if she moves or speaks," he said to the girl. "I shall not be five minutes absent."

He descended the stairs and entered the small room in which Meredith was lying. Her features in death had regained much of their former beauty. She looked so rarely changed since the first day they had met in his early youth. The restless dark eyes were closed; the violence of her frenzies had ended.

He had been powerless before the wild love which had only received scorn and rejection. He knew his life with her would have been miserable, profitless and wrecked, and yet it had been a wondrous and a mighty love after all!

But is not the power of loving genius? He forgave her the madness that had prompted her to seek to slay Lady Constance. He could not look into that white face deadening into an ivory hue with anger or unkindness at his heart at such a moment as this.

And there was something locked between her fingers which he endeavoured to loosen; a small gold brooch with his own hair twined amid a filagree scroll of pearls. She had clasped this in her last struggle.

"Farewell, Theresa," he said, calling her by the old familiar name, and bending over her, kissed her once on the brow. "And may you be forgiven all."

He passed slowly from the room and entered the library.

"Is this true, what I am told, that you are the real heir?" the earl asked, in a faint voice.

"It is, my lord."

"Would it be so very difficult for you to forget animosity and hatred at a time such as this? I admit that we have acted harshly and unfairly to both yourself and Constance. Will you be so noble as to forgive?" And he held out his hand.

Lionel flushed scarlet for a second, and then he took the earl's proffered hand.

"Yes," he said, and his face softened; "this is hardly a time for reproaches or anger when all points to happiness in the future."

"Lionel, you are a generous man," cried the earl, starting to his feet. "The future shall prove how I deplore—how keenly I regret the injury we have inflicted on you, and indeed, if you know how often I have longed, when you were in Australia, to send for you and save my Constance whom I saw drooping daily, you would be more lenient still, but my wishes were ever overruled by Lady Violet."

"And how let us seek Lady Constance; it will be an additional joy for her to see her father and husband re-united and at her side," said Lionel, and they left the room together.

As these reconciliations were progressing satisfactorily in the library, a very strange scene was taking place in the drawing-room. Dr. Moseley, ever prompt in action, when once his mind was made up, had prepared himself for a final charge, a brisk alert that should carry the "doubting heart" by storm.

Lady Violet, seated on one of the crimson ottomans, was still weeping, and Moseley hanging over her in the fondest attitude, was pleading with the most dulcet vibrations in his voice that it was possible to imagine, for that pity and consideration: his forlorn condition of mind exacted from the coldest breast. In fact his pleading grew at last so spasmodic and agonising, Lady Violet beseeched him to moderate his warmth, or a very painful denouement might be the result were the earl to overhear him.

"No, no," cried Moseley, "fairest angel that ever breathed; lovelier than Eve when she first stole on Adam's wondering vision and ravished senses, you shall not refuse to listen! Would you break my heart as well as ruin my peace of mind? Do you think aught can ever really separate two loving souls? You—you called me José but a minute previously!" he ended, piteously. "You could not be so capricious and heartless as to have been merely amusing yourself torturing my existence for a pastime."

Lady Violet felt just then rather blind and foolish. She was in one of her dangerous and wayward moods. She had been outwitted by Lionel, despised by Sir Hugh, and fancied she should not quite find her magnificent home so agreeable with Constance and Lionel reinstated in the earl's regard and affection.

To escape, therefore, seemed desirable, and yet it was a fatal and irrevocable step. She wondered what would become of her if José decamped from Paris or Madrid and left her alone in one of the fashionable hotels with many unpaid bills to meet. He may have driven the cause of her hesitation, for he said, with a shrewd and wonderful inspiration:

"Pardon me, darling, if during these moments of bewildering anxiety, dread and rapture, I have forgotten to allude to a little practical

matter between us which may prove to you I am a man of the world as well as a lover; worldly only for your sweet sake. I should of course make a settlement on you of my Brazilian property, the value of which may be roughly estimated at fifty thousand pounds. The government would give me that to-morrow. I am wealthy, Violet, and we will go away to fairer, clearer skies and lands than this. The law will give us release. The law, beneficent and protecting as it has been of late years, seems to say, 'There shall be a way of escape from a form of living death, more hateful than the penalties of a prison.' Love, glorious, potent and irresistible shall conquer after all, and you will be my wife."

"José!" sobbed Lady Violet, hiding her face in his arm, "your will is stronger than mine, direct, advise me and I will obey you."

"Get your cloak at once, my dearest, steal downstairs, and I will meet you in the long avenue, order the pony-carriage, and I will drive you to the station. We can catch the express train to Dover, and be in Paris by dawn. Angel! think of it! One kiss and we will fly to a life of peace and bliss abroad—of mutual sympathy and adoration. Life perfected and complete. Come, Violet, trust in the truest love man ever offered."

Did she think of another of her victims, the hapless Tessa, at that moment rocking the baby to sleep in its cradle and counting the hours till Ebenezer's return? Tessa also was weeping, but very different tears to Lady Violet. She was making up her small mind to dress that erratic infant, that ever turned from Mrs. Winslow's soothing syrup, as if it delighted in frustrating its noble intentions regarding slumber, only to make night hideous with its roars and provoke the wrath of its amiable papa by cries he invariably improved with unreasonable correction.

Tessa, wearing her nursery dress and apron, turned to the window many times to see if any cab were bearing home her Ebenezer. Suppose she dressed the baby, put it on its pretty amber-coloured pelisse and a clean bib, and presented herself at the Earl of Harrington's mansion demanding her lawful spouse as only a lawful wife can.

To be sure the action was not conventional, or in strictly good taste, but Tessa had long passed beyond such narrow limits as these, and all "the woman" rose in awful might. She had cried so violently and incessantly, her face looked swollen and puffy, but she must save Ebenezer from the awful meshes of that beautiful Lady Violet.

Tessa knew, with the keen instinct of the ignorant, that Lady Violet wholly eclipsed herself. Hence these tears, and she feared it might be impossible to prevent Ebenezer from loving her, still if he would only return to herself, the children and the lunatics, all should be forgiven, no matter what treacherous longings ruled his soul.

The little Moseleys gathered round their mother, the eldest trying to pinch the baby and see if its eyes could be taken out and put back again, like "Sissie Tessa's wax doll's." Tessa merely gave a loud scream at this indignity offered to the prodigy in the amber-coloured pelisse, and shook her son till his nose bled. This caused a general stampede of the rest round the room, which with the baby's lamentations from the assault on its eyes, did not exactly render the nursery an inviting abode. Hearing this alarming noise, Jennings, the dwarf, thought it a good opportunity for inviting himself to tea, he tapped gently at the nursery door.

"Who is dere?" asked Tessa, in a loud voice.

"Jennings, my dear Mrs. Moseley, perhaps I could pacify the children."

"Oh, come in and welcome," said Tessa, still sobbing furiously.

She was good-hearted in the main, and extremely grateful to Jennings for his devotion to the children. Jennings entered.

"I grieve to see you in distress," he said, while the children rushed to him and dived into his pockets for sweets and presents.

"Oh, he will not come 'ome, Mr. Jennings, he lofe a voman," sobbed Tessa, whose pride and self respect were not inexorable.

"Ah!" said Jennings, shaking his large head. "Very bad, very bad indeed."

"Bad, it is vicked, it is cruel."

"Cruel; he was always that," said the dwarf, thinking of the rope.

"An if he nevare come, I shall die," said Tessa, tying the baby's bib in a double knot in her agitation.

"Why not go after him and remonstrate with him?" said the dwarf.

"Dat is vat I mean to," said Tessa, nodding her head. "Oh, no, no, he don't escape quite so easy as all dat. I make him feel a leetle ashame. I take dis 'bambino' and go now."

"But do you know where he is? Is it in any gambling, saloon, or low music hall?" asked Jennings, as if he had hit the mark.

"He ate music, he gamble not at all, he vent by die train to dat place vere we ad die dance," explained Tessa, getting out her hat and jacket, "and I go fetch 'im 'ome."

"Better not," said the dwarf, on second thoughts.

"I mak up me mind," said Tessa, ringing the bell, which was promptly answered, and then she consigned the little Moseleys to the care of an experienced nurse.

"Law, mum, going to take baby out this time in the evening," said that functionary; "bless his little heart, and just cutting a tooth too. Master wouldn't hear of it."

"He vill 'ear of it," said Tessa, biting her lip and wrapping the baby in a large checked shawl. "Good-bye, me children," she called out, her tears falling on them; "Mr. Jennings, good-bye too, I go to seek Ebenezer."

"Poor soul," sighed the dwarf, "she's too good for him when all is said and done. I thought he'd something on his mind of late, and this must have been it."

Meanwhile Lady Violet and Dr. Moseley were both hurrying towards the long avenue, where the pony-carriage awaited them. It was an elegant bijou affair. The chestnut ponies, the luxurious rugs, the impenetrable groom, all were perfect in their taste and selection, and the beautiful woman who seized the reins, with her accustomed grace and ease, had the air of a goddess in some triumphal car, so daring was her mien, so haughty her bearing. It was one of those enchanting visions of dazzling piquancy and glowing health men of Dr. Moseley's type find so irresistible. Now, flushed with excitement and more than ever reckless in her daring, she drove the ponies at so rapid a rate, he had a firm conviction the nearest ditch, and not the nearest railway station, would ultimately receive their shattered brains.

But no, the ponies understood their mistress, those delicate-looking wrists were in truth strong and firm as steel. Dr. Moseley drew a deep breath of satisfaction as the last corner was cleverly turned, and they dashed up to the station.

All here was crude and prosaic enough. Porters struggling with boxes and trunks, &c., were hurrying to and fro; various loading specimens of mankind, followed by muzzled bulldogs; an Italian boy playing a concertina, and two or three young ladies accompanied by an amiable "sheep-dog," as a great writer politely designates a duenna, adorned the platform.

Dr. Moseley suggested some refreshment in the tone full of the poetry of the hour—still sandwiches and brandy-flasks are not to be despised on occasions of even so romantic a kind as this—and that memory of Tessa and the little Moseleys at Bayswater would present itself like a bad attack of mental indigestion.

Lady Violet had decidedly unpleasant qualms, in feeling she was almost ridiculous in this new character of a heroine of melodrama, yet it was always something to be a heroine, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances.

It was a time for rapture, delirium and deep draughts of the strong, rough wine of love and idolatrous fantasies. José was evidently devoted, and his eyes flashed more brilliantly and

continuously than ever Sir Hugh's had done. Poor fellow, he had been a very tame and rapid lover after all. She was quite as well rid of him.

But sentimental whispers are unmistakably at a disadvantage at a railway station. The duenna was scolding a porter who had sent her bonnet-box rolling over the lines. The "fighting" parties were whistling music-hall ditties in opposition to the smiling Italian boy, whose ex-cruciating, serenade of "Santa Lucia" was almost more than the patience of even happy lovers can bear.

"When will the train leave, José?" asked Lady Violet, after having partaken of some refreshment.

He consulted his watch.

"In about five minutes. Shall we take our seats? All the wrappings are here, and see, I have bought some of the comics—long journey to Dover, and there's the 'Graphic,' too, and a railway novel."

Lady Violet suddenly gave a violent start, and grasped the doctor's arm.

"Is it too late to get my darling Flo?" she asked, dropping her eyeglass, and glancing towards the entrance to see if the chestnuts had yet driven away. "José, I have forgotten to bring Flo with me, and she's such a sweet—"

"Ah! the dog?" he inquired. "I felt it sniffing at my heels in the pony-carriage. Never mind Flo just now, we'll buy another in Paris to-morrow ten times finer, and it would be a bore on the packet."

Lady Violet resigned herself to the loss of her pet with becoming grace, and consoled herself with her latest amusement—Dr. Moseley.

It was strange that the train conveying the hapless Tessa and her baby to the Hall should pass the one in which Dr. Moseley and Lady Violet were in, but so it was, and the doctor had also a remarkably distinct view of his wife's firm square form clad in a neat cloth jacket, with the baby on her knee hushing it to sleep. It was too much for even his discretion to bear in silence.

"Gad! she's on the track already," he muttered, pulling his beard in a gloomy way. "That woman we caught a flash of as the trains slackened speed at Thornfield Junction was my—my wife."

Lady Violet shuddered.

"Dreadful creature, and so shockingly dressed too. I think I never saw so hideous a shawl as the baby was wrapped in."

"Oh, I'm very well rid of her, indeed," said her husband. "She was a regular kill-joy, and I always wanted a lady society caressed and smiled on."

"I'm afraid society will be inclined to punish me just a little," said Lady Violet, in her sweetest way, "for a time."

"We will buy ourselves back into the good opinions of the terrible Janus, and give splendid dinners," said Moseley, stretching his legs. "That's about the pull of it."

The chestnuts began to grow very impatient for the return of their mistress. The groom also grew uneasy and harangued a porter.

"Have you seen a tall lady as went to see off a dark kind of swell by this train that's just gone?" he asked.

"What, him as carried a dandyfied wrapper and a fur-lined coat?" replied the porter. "I know him, he tipped me well too, and they went in a carriage by themselves too. Lovers, ain't they?"

"Good gracious, you don't say so! That's our young lady at the Hall," cried the astonished groom. "Won't it make a talk too, as if it wasn't enough to have a double murder and suicide in the house as well!" he muttered, gathering up the reins and placing the forsaken Flo between his knees.

He drove at once to the stables and communicated the interesting intelligence to his colleagues. They gathered round him in the harness-room and drank fresh libations of the earl's best ale with additional verve, but after the porter's opinion, given with the weight of a veteran, it was not so much a matter of surprise

to them to read in one of the local papers a few days later:

"EXTRAORDINARY AFFAIR IN HIGH LIFE.—We have received the following astounding intelligence from the highest authority: The lovely and accomplished Lady Violet H—n has eloped with the world-renowned and justly celebrated doctor E—r M—y, whose reputation stands so high in his profession, and whose opinion has been so eagerly sought by counsel in many recent famous criminal lunatic cases. The pair are at present in Switzerland."

The earl and Lionel were expecting Lady Violet's appearance among them, and were considerably surprised at her long absence. When the bell rang violently and a thundering double-knock also assailed the door they quite believed it was she. But for a moment only. A gentlewoman, holding an infant in a shawl, presented herself in their midst, and much to the earl's astonishment, darted towards him, threw herself down by his side, to the imminent risk of dislocating the baby's collar-bone, as she beseeched him to restore her husband to her arms, and use his influence to restrain Lady Violet from ruining her happiness.

"Vere is he?" Tessa was saying, wildly. "You know, but you will not say. Giv' me Ebenezer. I know he lofe your daughter—a clevare, vicked voman. It is Lady Violet I wish to see, and Ebenezer!"

"What can she mean, Lionel?" asked the earl, gravely. "It is the first time I have ever heard of this scandalous intrigue, and the poor creature is evidently distracted."

"Vere are dey?" she repeated, walking to and fro.

The earl left the room to make strict inquiries, and it ended at last in his sending for the groom, who had accompanied the missing pair to the station. Tessa screamed at this fresh arrival; it betokened flight.

"You say you drove your mistress by her own orders to the station with Dr. Moseley," said the earl, more than certain the worst had happened.

"My lady ordered the ponies and drove herself, my lord," the groom explained.

"Me 'usband," sobbed Tessa, "did he go too?"

"Dr. Moseley certainly accompanied her ladyship, madame," the man answered.

Tessa groaned afresh.

"I 'ave seen 'im for die last time. Oh, it is keeling me!"

"You are quite certain they entered the station and left together by the train?" said the earl.

"Quite certain, my lord. I asked Bede, the porter, why her ladyship did not return to the pony-carriage, and he said, my lord, they had departed by themselves in a railway carriage."

"By demselves?" sobbed Tessa, putting the baby down on a couch. "Young man, you are sure you speak to me die truth? If you've a wife at 'ome you vill know perhaps vat I feel."

"You may retire," said the earl, not caring to be annoyed with an account of his groom's domestic revelations.

"I deeply grieve for you, dear Mrs. Moseley, in this sad affliction," he said, while Lionel saved the infant from rolling on to the floor. Tessa's agony was such she had for the first time forgotten the "bambino."

"Grievin' not cure me," she moaned, rocking to and fro. "I shall 'ave to go 'ome to Italy and tak' the children."

There was a pause, and then the door slowly opened, and Lady Constance, looking pale and worn, entered, leaning on a servant's arm, while Lionel rushed to her side and led her to a seat. Tessa, in view of this apparition, lost the last remnant of her presence of mind. This was the pale ghost Ebenezer had consigned to a coffin, and at whose resurrection Tessa had nearly fainted. Still alive and looking just the same as when she arose from her trance!

Tessa began to tremble violently, and sus-

pected the English possessed some magic arts at their command, to the sorcery of which Ebenezer had at last succumbed. The magnitude of this new idea changed the current of her thoughts. All her desire was now to escape.

"How you tremble," Lady Constance was saying, in her sweet tones. "There is nothing to fear; we will take care of you and see you safely home. What a darling little baby, too. May I nurse him a little?"

Tessa placed the infant in Lady Constance's arms, soothed imperceptibly by her voice. The baby opened his eyes, still somewhat sore from his brother's attack, and forgot to cry. This charmed Tessa anew.

"Isn't he a beauty?" she said, "and 'is 'air is fine as silk."

Lady Constance kissed the dimpling chin and lips, and expressed the warmest admiration. Lionel brought Tessa a cup of tea, and persuaded her to take off her heavy jacket and felt hat. But after a few sips, Tessa's ready sleepiness appeared disposed to overtake her; worn out by the violence of her mental emotions, her head sunk backwards, and she slept.

(To be Concluded in our Next.)

SCIENCE.

EDISON'S ELECTRIC LIGHT.

If Mr. Edison wishes public faith in that electric light of his to remain steadfast, he will have to give an early demonstration of the truth of his claim that it is a practical success. When he first announced that he had solved the problem of dividing the light and of adapting it to domestic uses, there was a very general inclination to accept the story with absolute confidence, because Mr. Edison had proved by his previous inventions that he could achieve some things which had been regarded by other men as impossible.

But, after all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the world, after waiting patiently for the public display of an invention which sent gas stocks down as soon as it was heralded, will be disposed, unless Mr. Edison shows his hand, to suspect that the Edison Electric Light and the Keely Motor will have to be ranked together as enterprises which contained much more of promise than of performance.—Ed.]

STIMULATION OF THE NERVES OF THE HEAD.

DR. BRUNTON remarks that there are two nerves, known as the "fifth pair," which are distributed to the skin of the head and to the mucous membrane of the eyes, nose, and mouth. These nerves are closely connected with the heart and vessels, and by stimulating their branches the circulation may be greatly influenced, as in the case of fainting. It is a curious fact that people of all nations are accustomed, when in any difficulty, to stimulate one or another branch of the fifth nerve, and quicken their mental processes.

Thus, some persons when puzzled, scratch their heads; others rub their foreheads; and others stroke or pull their beards, thus stimulating the occipital, frontal, or mental branches of these nerves. Many Germans when thinking have a habit of striking their fingers against their noses, and thus stimulating the nasal cutaneous branches, while in other countries some people stimulate the branches distributed to the mucous membrane of the nose by taking snuff.

The late Lord Derby, when translating Homer, was accustomed to eat brandied cherries. One man will eat figs while composing a leading article; another will suck chocolate creams; others will smoke cigarettes; and others sip brandy and water. By these means they stimulate the lingual and buccal branches of the fifth nerve, and thus reflexly excite their brains.

Alcohol appears to excite the circulation through the brain reflexly from the mouth, and to stimulate the heart reflexly from the stomach, even before it is absorbed into the blood. Shortly after it has been swallowed, however, it is absorbed from the stomach, and passes with the blood to the heart, to the brain, and to the other parts of the nervous system, upon which it then begins to act directly. Under its influence the heart beats more quickly, the blood circulates more freely, and thus the functional power of the various organs in the body is increased so that the brain may think more rapidly, the muscles act more powerfully, and the stomach digest more easily.

But with this exception, the effect of alcohol upon the nervous system may be described as one of progressive paralysis. The higher centres suffer first, and the judgment is probably the first quality to be impaired, and this becomes the more so as the effect of the alcohol progresses, although the other faculties of the mind may remain not only undiminished by the direct action of the alcohol on the brain, but greatly increased by the general excitement of the circulation. By-and-bye, however, the other parts of the nervous system are successively weakened, the tongue stammers, the vision becomes double, the legs fail, and the person falls insensible.

It is evident, then, that only the first stages of alcoholic action are at all beneficial, the later stages being as clearly injurious.

OXIDE OF ZINC IN DIARRHOEA.

THE value of oxide of zinc in diarrhoea has long been known, but is apt to be overlooked. Some recent reports on the subject have been made by Dr. Tyson, of New York, and Dr. Bonamy of Nantes. The formula which the latter uses is: R. Zinc oxidii 54 grains. Sodæ bicarb 7½ grains. In four packets, one to be taken every six hours.

In all the cases which he observed oxide of zinc produced rapid cure of diarrhoea. In fourteen cases observed by Pyrgartier the cure was even more rapid, since in only one case were three doses of the medicine required. The results are considered to have been more satisfactory, inasmuch as in several cases the malady had endured from one to many months, and other methods of treatment had not produced any improvement. Thus he concludes that, although by no means to be held as exclusive treatment, the employment of oxide of zinc deserves to be more generally known as useful in diarrhoea.

A RUSSIAN HERO.

OR,

Marko Tyre's Treason.

CHAPTER XXI.

At the very instant of leaving the palace, the glances of Marko encountered a man who was crouching beside and partly under the great steps, in an evident attempt to escape observation.

This man was Girgas Dal, our hero's predecessor in command of the guards of the imperial household.

He was pallid as a corpse, and seemed to be suffocating.

"What! in town again?" queried Marko. "We heard you had been wounded, and supposed you to be with your aunt!"

Dal mumbled some unintelligible response, as he staggered forth from his attempted cover.

"You are ill, I see," added Marko. "Let me help you or call for assistance!"

Dal stayed the movement by a gesture.

"It's passing away," he gasped, as a swift flush displaced his wild pallor. "I—I am better!

I've lost considerable blood, and endured a great deal of pain. My ride from the country, too, has taxed me severely! Besides—I have overheard everything!"

"All that has just been said in the reception-room, you mean?"

"Yes, all that has just passed between you and Miss Gradowsky and the empress," avowed Dal, in a husky whisper. "I was making my way into the palace with the intention of casting myself at the feet of the empress, as well as at the feet of Miss Gradowsky, as well as at yours, Colonel, to implore forgiveness, when I caught a few words——"

"And so you listened to what we were saying?"

A scornful sneer curled Marko's lips.

"You have verified the old proverb, then," he added, "that listeners never hear any good of themselves."

He was about to pass on, too scornful to even reproach Dal for attempting his life, when the fallen favourite detained him with an imploring gesture.

Perhaps a stronger contrast could not be given than that presented by the two men at that moment—the one noble, good, generous, commanding and attractive; the other mean, desperate, shame-faced and repulsive.

The features of Dal were coarse, and his manners, like his tastes, of a low grade, although the restraints to which he had been subjected in the palace had kept his real character concealed.

Only our hero had formed any just estimate of Dal's baseness, and he was far from suspecting one tenth of his wickedness.

"I wish to have a talk with you, Colonel Tyre," said Dal. "I want your advice and assistance. As low as I must appear in your eyes, will you not befriend me? In one fell swoop I have lost everything. Here are you on the high road to glory, the accepted suitor of Roda, and an especial pet of Catherine, while I—what am I? Virtually an outcast—a friendless pariah—a wolf in a desert!"

There was no mistaking the excitement and desperation of Girgas Dal as he uttered these words.

"Calm yourself," said our hero, who could not help pitying him, so great was the difference between his position and prospects and his own. "If you wish to say anything to me walk with me towards the harbour."

Muttering his thanks for this kindness, Dal hastened to accompany our hero in the direction indicated.

"You know as well as I do, Colonel Tyre," said Dal, when he had become calmer, "that my position is not what it was three years ago. There has been a great change!"

Marko reflected a moment. Clearly Dal had received a great shock.

From this hour might date a better era for him.

Perhaps his faults came in part from thoughtlessness.

Would it not be well to make an effort to bring him into the right path? Generous and indulgent to a fault, as well as anxious for the good of one who had so long been his daily companion, our hero resolved not to even allude to the late dastardly attempt upon his life. He responded accordingly.

"What you say about your changed position is true, but it is to yourself that the change is owing. We entered the palace as pages together. The empress had been the particular friend of your father, and she placed us upon an equal footing, gave us equal duties, and in all her dealings with us showed us equal consideration."

"It was certainly so in the beginning!" muttered Dal, with a double glance of hatred—one at our hero, and the other in the direction of the palace.

"But of late the empress had seen a great difference between us," continued Marko. "I do not say this to reproach you, neither to exalt myself, but as a simple fact. While I toiled early and late, and saved my money, and avoided evil associations, and devoted myself earnestly to

all my duties, you have taken an exactly contrary course.

"You first idled over your work—then neglected it—and finally began absenting yourself with it altogether. You have kept late hours with bad company, and been seen drinking and carousing in public places. You have even frequented some of those strange sailors along the quays who lie under the suspicion of being corsairs. It has been months since you worked a full day or since you responded fully to any trust reposed in you. Have I not spoken the exact truth?"

Dal nodded assent. He was growing calm rapidly.

"But all is not yet lost," added Marko. "The empress has shown you every indulgence, and you know that I have excused your shortcomings whenever I could. If you were now to turn over a new leaf, you might yet regain her majesty's favour. She knows that you are capable and she does not believe that you are really wicked at heart. Why not change everything for the better this very night? You can, if you will."

"Do you think so?" returned Dal. "I knew that all was lost, of course, the instant you stood revealed as such a swordsman. I saw at once that that fact would open the heart of the empress more widely than ever, and that nothing would give her more pleasure than to push you onward. To add to my misery, you have won Gradowsky and his daughter, and in the twinkling of an eye all has been settled to my external disadvantage. You are a thousand leagues ahead of me, Colynel Tyre—not only in position but in love!"

"I have certainly secured the hand of Miss Gradowsky," said our hero, gently; "but it is just as certain that you cannot be greatly disappointed at this result, inasmuch as she has never encouraged your attentions. You and I have never been rivals, and consequently there is not the least reason for us to cease to speak, since I don't care for your late assault upon me. And now what is to hinder your being a man? Only a weak idiot will permit himself to love a lady whose heart and hand belong to another, and only an utter villain will persist in wooing a lady when her preference for another has been clearly stated. You ought to be neither a knave nor an idiot, and hence you will smother any little regrets you may have experienced in this business. Hence, too, you will accept the forgiveness and goodwill Miss Gradowsky and her father, as well as myself, are ready to continue to you, and will throw off the fetters which have hitherto prevented you from rising to your proper position!"

"I thank you for these kindly sentiments, Colonel Tyre," said Dal, as he seized the hand of our hero. "A brother could not be more considerate. With your aid and approval, I will indeed endeavour to walk in the right direction!"

Marko returned heartily the grasp of the hand offered him, and the couple then walked on in silence, paying little attention to the joyous throngs in the streets, or to the shadows that had now gathered around them. It is enough to say of the night that had thus descended upon the scene that it was worthy of the day by which it had been preceded.

By the time the couple had reached the outer quays, Marko had settled his thoughts calmly upon the facts of the present and the prospects of the future, arriving at a peace of mind as serene as it was joyous. He accordingly began to devote himself to the especial object of his walk—the expansion of his body and mind, the repose of his brain, and the recreation of all his jaded senses.

It would have been hard, in good truth, for him to have remained oblivious of the bright and joyous scenes in the midst of which he and Dal were passing.

The quays and the little squares adjacent were teeming with life, and with life in all the varied and picturesque aspects of the North.

Not only the habitual residents of the city were abroad, but also the numerous strangers

whom the interests of trade and commerce had collected from every quarter of the world. The harbour was covered with boats with swelling sails, and with emotions which may well be compared with the flight of birds, such were their airy and graceful movements.

The eating-houses along the water-front were full of customers, principally sailors, and throughout all these crowds only one spirit was manifest—that of enjoyment, peace, good-nature, and contentment.

Our hero had paused upon one of the quays to enjoy the scene before him and the fresh breeze that swept in from the Baltic, when Dal touched him on the shoulder.

"Let's take a sail in the harbour, Colonel Tyre," he proposed. "I have a good boat in waiting at the end of the quay."

"A boat of your own, you mean?"

"Yes, a boat of my own," said Dal, with a forced laugh. "It isn't necessary to live like a dog because I'm obliged to serve for a living. I have long been in the habit of treating myself to an occasional hour of enjoyment. It is pleasant to me to be out in the world again. Suppose we honour the occasion by a sail to the lighthouse?"

Marko hesitated, but only a moment. It seemed to him that his indulgent treatment of Dal had not been without effect, and he was anxious to further advise and influence his late commander to his benefit, and so free Roda and himself from a possible great peril.

"You will get fresh air on the water," added Dal, with a snaky gleam in his eyes and with averted face. "What do you say?"

"Oh, just as you choose, Dal," returned Marko. "I will join you if you feel like taking a sail. Only, we must not go too far, as the night promises to be dark in the absence of the moon."

"As far as you please, and no farther," said Dal, into whose voice had suddenly crept a strange huskiness, even as a singular excitement and eagerness began to influence his bearing. "You can suit yourself, of course."

He led the way to the pier where his boat was lying, and the couple quietly embarked, pushing off.

The sail was set by Dal, who took the helm, and they were soon leaving the city rapidly behind them.

"It seems odd to find you the owner of such a nice boat," said Marko, as he watched the performance of the craft admiringly. "It must have cost you a great deal of money."

"It did; but I am paid by the enjoyment it gives me. Is it not grand to be sweeping over the waters like a bird?"

"It is indeed."

It had been several weeks since Marko was upon the water, and he enjoyed the sail greatly. A long silence succeeded, neither of the two men caring to talk, and in this interval the boat sailed far out into the darkness that was now resting upon the harbour.

"You can own such a boat yourself, if you choose," at length suggested Dal. "You have saved up money enough already to buy half-a-dozen like it without feeling it. Why are you so saving? Why do you work so hard?"

"It's because I am looking to the future, Dal—because I am resolved to be a rich man, sooner or later. A little recreation now and then is not amiss—it is even necessary; but we must not lose sight in our pleasures of the real business of existence."

"No, we must not," returned Dal, hoarsely, with a wild glance around him. "I do not intend to!"

He laughed hollowly as he noted the loneliness and stillness of the scene in which he and Marko were now figuring.

"Perhaps we ought to turn back now, Dal?" suggested Marko, after a pause.

"Why so?"

"Because I do not care to stay out late. Besides, is not the wind freshening a little? Is not the water getting a little rough?"

"I don't see any change worth mentioning!"

"Is there no danger of running upon some rock?"

"Not the least, Colonel. I know every foot of the harbour!"

Marko remained silent a few moments longer, and then said:

"In any case, I would like to turn back now, if you have no objection, Dal. How dark it is getting here! The waves seem to be dangerous to anyone in such a small boat!"

"I will turn back in a moment. Have a smoke?"

At the same time Marko entered upon a close watch of his companion. It was only natural he should have constantly present in his soul his late adventure upon the Neva with Dal, and it is needless to say that he felt himself perfectly competent to protect himself against any repetition of that assault.

"Is anyone near us?" resumed Dal, after a pause.

"Not a soul."

"You know where we are, I suppose? Somewhere on the northwest side of the harbour, are we not?"

"No, we are in mid-channel, at the entrance of the harbour. The water is deep here. The winds and the waves are really getting too rough for us. We will turn back immediately, eh? What do you say?"

Marko half arose, dropping the cigar Dal had given him.

"I—I feel strange," he said.

Dal shrank within himself, his eyes gleaming, his entire manner expectant—terrible!

"Villain! you—have poisoned me!" added Marko, gaspingly. "I—"

The words died away upon his lips, and he tumbled motionless into the bottom of the boat.

"That is the way I act upon your advice about sticking to the real business of existence, my fine fellow," muttered Dal, with a savage chuckle. "This is my first step in a new crusade for the hand of the beautiful Roda!"

Hastily binding his victim, with cords brought for the purpose, Dal seized the helm again, set his sail—the sheet of which he had necessarily loosened while leaving the boat to itself—and took his course towards a faint light shining through the gathering gloom at no great distance.

This light was soon perceived to be that of a lantern hanging at the mast of a vessel which lay at anchor.

"Good! Here is the 'Alexina'!" ejaculated Dal. "I was sure I'd find her!"

He was soon alongside.

"Give me a rope," he called to a man leaning over the side, who had evidently been watching him. "I am Dal!"

"All right!"

The rope was thrown him, and he secured it to his insensible victim.

"Haul away," he then called.

The order was obeyed. Our unconscious hero soon lay like a log upon the deck of the strange vessel.

A second use of the rope was then made, and Dal also reached the stranger's deck, where he was greeted as an old acquaintance.

"This is the man I spoke of, Lieutenant Argolin," observed Dal, touching the body of Marko with his foot, when a few greetings had been exchanged.

"Marko Tyre, eh?" returned Argolin, holding a lantern to our hero's face. "He looks like one who might be dangerous to our sort, Colonel!"

"And so he is! You would never be able to lay Gradowsky under contribution so long as this fellow—the old man's proposed son-in-law—was on the premises and in possession of his freedom. And now that he is in your hands you must take good care that he does not get out of them."

"Oh, he never will!" answered Lieutenant Argolin, carelessly, and yet in the tone of entire conviction.

"Never? never?"

"No, never! You see our people are resolved to make a clean sweep in various quarters, and since this man is really a stumbling-block on our path, depend upon us, he will never trouble you again!"

"Then depend upon me for all the work agreed upon," murmured Dal. "Let me see this man disposed of, Lieutenant Argolin, and I will hasten back to the city."

Nodding assent, Argolin made a gesture to a couple of rough-looking seamen in outlandish garb, who had walked aft, and who at that nod lost no time in conveying our hero into the hold, where he was soon heavily ironed and secured by a chain to an iron ring in a bulk-head.

"You can see yourself what sort of a chance there is for him to escape from that fix!" said Argolin, grimly.

"Yes, he's fast," returned Dal. "And see! he is recovering from the effects of the drug I was compelled to give him to bring him within the scope of your hospitality, Argolin! A little cold water will bring him around in a few minutes—if you think he is worth saving."

"Oh, he is!" said Argolin, laughing. "He may give us any little particular you may have omitted!"

"Well, in any case, do not let him come back to me!"

"Oh, that's our bargain! You have only to keep your agreement, and we shall keep ours!"

"Then I can be off!"

With a pleased sort of air, Argolin placed one of his rough-looking satellites on guard with a cutlass over our hero, and then led the way to the deck, lighting Dal to the ship's side, and watching him long after he had bidden him adieu and taken his departure in the direction of the city.

"It's a pity the young man is so moral and high-toned," muttered Dal, with another horrible chuckle, as he sped away shorewards. "He won't find these pirates of the Baltic very good company! But I—I am in luck for once, just as aunt suggested I might be! Marko Tyre is out of my way—as General Gradowsky will be before morning, if he goes back to his estates—and at an early day I can contrive to remove all the barriers between me and Miss Gradowsky! I can even make my peace with the empress any moment by telling her what I know, and taking the ground that I have never ceased to act in her interest! Ah! the race is not yet won by my enemies, nor am I so powerless as they imagine!"

How like a gloating and exulting demon he looked as he sped swiftly on his way towards the city!

CHAPTER XXII.

WHEN Marko recovered his senses, his first impression was that he had lost them altogether, so foreign and strange and disagreeable were all the aspects of the scene around him.

There was a wall above him, walls around him.

He was in the centre of a small space which was nearly full of all sorts of bales and boxes.

Into this space shone faintly the rays of a lantern which hung against what appeared to be the mainmast of a ship, as seen between decks, and beneath this light stood a man of terrific aspect, armed with a cutlass.

"Who are you?" suddenly cried Marko, addressing himself at once to the most prominent feature of the scene.

"Oh, ho!" returned the man addressed, with a violent start, as he turned his gaze full upon our hero. "You are yourself again, eh? All that groaning and wailing is finally changed to a good, natural breathing, is it?"

"Where am I?" was Marko's second query, as his glances swept swiftly around him.

"Where are you?" sneered the unknown. "Well, that is good for an inhabitant of the far-famed city of St. Petersburg. Don't you see that you are in the hold of a ship?"

Marko passed his hands over his eyes two or three times, as if struggling with a profound bewilderment.

"I remember now," he muttered. "I was in a boat with Colonel Dal, taking a sail, and—yes, smoking, when I lost my senses, very much

as I did the other night after leaving the empress. Man," and he turned sternly to the unknown, "where is Colonel Dal?"

"That's the man who brought you here, I suppose?" was the response. "Well, the colonel has left us. He seemed to have pressing business ashore."

"But where am I? What ship is this?"

"It's the Stettin brig 'Alexina'!"

Marko repeated the word, or rather would have repeated it, if it had not died away upon his lips in his utter amazement.

The "Alexina!"

This was the latest name of the most famous pirate ship that had ever sailed the Baltic, even as her commander was one of the most renowned and successful of his kind. She had for years been a scourge of the commerce between Russia and Norway and Sweden and the German ports of the Baltic.

She had changed her name twenty times, and was even believed to have changed her form and rig repeatedly.

The few poor ships of the empire had not yet been able to hunt out the "Alexina," although some were building that were expected to do the business.

That this famed piratical cruiser should be so near the capital was a fact only excelled in marvellousness by the presence of our hero aboard of her.

At the utterance of that name, therefore, Marko started as if a powerful electric current had been turned upon him.

"The 'Alexina'!" he ejaculated. "But what am I doing aboard of her? Surely," and he passed his hands over his eyes again, "this must be some horrible illusion!"

The unknown laughed grimly.

"If you think so, Colonel Tyre," he said, "you had better wrestle a few minutes with those shackles upon your legs! If they don't tell you you are a prisoner, and a pretty close one, too, then art thou with less feeling than a block of wood, and with less discernment than an owl at noon-day!"

Quickly enough did a consciousness of his actual condition come over Marko's soul in all its horrors.

"Where is your commander, fellow?" he suddenly demanded.

"He's ashore on business, I have no hesitation in telling you, although it is none of my affair, and my orders are simply to cut your head off at the first sign of trouble from you!"

"Ashore, eh?" commented Marko.

He mused a moment upon this strange circumstance, and added:

"Then who is in charge here?"

"The lieutenant—as you ought to know, if you really are a colonel!"

"Have you any objections to sending word to the lieutenant that I wish to see him?"

"Not the least; but I shall be greatly surprised if he pays the least attention to you. Fact is, he also has important business on hand for to-night!"

The guard, or sentry, as he appeared to be, took his way to the foot of the ladder by which the hold was reached, thrust his head out of the hatchway, and bawled in sufficiently stentorian tones the wishes of the prisoner.

"All right," was the response, as a figure descended into the hold. "Here I am!"

The new-comer dropped into an easy attitude of attention upon one of the bales of goods immediately in front of the prisoner.

"Is Col. Dal a friend of yours, Lieutenant?" was our hero's first question.

"Colonel Dal is a tool, spy, or whatever else you choose to call him, of the association to which I have the honour to belong, Colonel Tyre," was the answer.

"Then that man is not what he is supposed to be!" declared Marko.

The lieutenant laughed heartily.

"Is that a piece of news to you, Colonel Tyre?" he asked, stroking his beard complacently. "We have long known the colonel as one of the most cunning conspirators in the empire. Many is the rare favour he has done for us, such

as telling us where and how to make a large haul of plunder, and more especially how to avoid the cruisers sent out to catch us. This is the sort of ally the colonel is, sir, and this is why we are now lending him our assistance against you!"

"I see," breathed Marko, writhing in his bonds. "It is to Dal, then—not to your captain—that I owe this outrage. He drugged me, of course, in that cigar, and Roda—"

He was silent a moment, absolutely startled at the sudden and terrible perceptions of trouble—both for Roda and for himself—that swept in a wild flood through his soul.

"It is for Dal that you are doing this thing?" he resumed.

The lieutenant nodded.

"And this ship is what your guard has declared it to be?"

All the information he had received on this head was promptly confirmed.

"I cannot understand your devotion to Colonel Dal," he said, after a brief pause. "I should think your time would be better employed in scouring the Baltic for booty than in assisting Dal to make war upon a man who has done you no injury!"

"Softly, my dear fellow," returned the lieutenant. "Your identity is of no particular consequence in the case. We are not making war upon you, but are obliging the colonel. He is one of the great men of a conspiracy that has long been organising against the throne and life of Catherine, and the 'Alexina' is also a feature of the plot. We have no quarrel with you, Colonel Tyre, but we will do anything in the world to oblige our ally, the colonel!"

"Then I suppose it would be useless for me to attempt to make any terms with you for my freedom?"

"Perfectly useless, I am sorry to say," answered the lieutenant. "In the first place, I am only second in command, and nothing could be done for your relief until the return of the captain from the city."

"Then I need not trouble you further," said Marko, settling himself back into his chains. "But captivity is your worst design concerning me, I suppose? You have no designs upon my life?"

"Oh, not the least—unless you revolt against the countersign of this honest fellow here," and the lieutenant indicated the guard. "He has orders to cut you down at any sign of a rescue or escape, but in all other cases to treat you with perfect consideration!"

Nodding his appreciation of even this scanty hope, Marko turned away his glances, and the lieutenant withdrew. The nature of the countersign showed that his situation was one of grave peril.

In good truth, what could he do for himself, or for those so much dearer to him than his own life or liberty?

In what way could he free himself from the heavy bars and chains which had been placed upon him?

How subtract himself from the Argus eyes of the man who was standing guard over him?

Manifestly, he was a helpless prisoner—as powerless to break his bonds as if death itself had already set its seal upon him!

And so he wrestled in silence with all the great weight of his misery, while the long minutes of his vigil slowly resolved themselves into hours, and still he was a helpless prisoner.

At length came a change of sentry, but Marko did not address a word to the new functionary, or even venture to cherish the least hope of present relief.

The more he considered the plots and projects which had been avowed by the lieutenant, the more clearly did the lone prisoner realise that the pirates had every inducement to maintain their hold of him.

"Well, you seem fairly demented," ejaculated the new sentry, in a voice as thick and muffled as his garments, after he had contemplated our hero several minutes in silence. "Don't you see that a new man is on guard? Haven't you a word to say to me?"

"No. Why should I speak to such as you?"
"You might at least make an attempt to bribe me!"

"What would be the use? You would hasten to report the fact to your superiors, in order to give yourself importance in their sight! I have no wish to make my position worse by rendering you that office!"

"Well enough said," commented the sentry, drawing nearer and lowering his voice. "But hark ye, prisoner! I am not one of those pirates, although I happen to be among them, and the wish to assist you in this desperate strait may not be so foreign to my soul as you seem to suppose!"

At these words, Marko fixed his gaze with devouring earnestness upon the speaker. It was easy to see that the manner of his guardian was not the grim and forbidding manner of his predecessor. A gleam of hope seemed to radiate from him.

"Oh! if you would befriend me!" was the aspiration that arose to Marko's lips. "But it's madness to think of such a thing! Besides, you could not help me, if you would!"

The sentry drew still nearer with warning gestures.

"Relief is possible," he said, in even a lower whisper than before—"that is, if you do not mind incurring a reasonable risk."

"Risk! What is risk to me?" demanded Marko, with fierce emphasis. "Would a thousand deaths staring me in the face keep me here a minute if I had the least loophole of escape? But why mock a helpless man?"

"Hush!" enjoined the sentry—who was now close to the prisoner's side—"The hour is late—the night as dark as Egypt. The crew are abed and asleep, as is the lieutenant, and the commander is absent. The watch on deck is a small one, and even this may be presumed to be stowed away asleep in some corner. In port, you know, where nothing could be undertaken against us without our hearing of it from our spies beforehand, it is not necessary to keep one's eyes constantly on the stretch."

"You mean, then—"

"Certainly, I mean to give you a chance," said the sentry. "See! here are the keys to free you from these irons. It matters little how I procured them—here they are! What is to prevent me, therefore, from setting you free?"

"Oh! if you would!"

"Well, I will! But not a word about rewards and all that. It is enough for the present that you will remember the act, and that you will do a kindness for me whenever and wherever I call upon you for it. And once you are free from these irons—Can you swim?"

"Very well—a reasonable distance."

"That's good! It's utterly impossible for me to lower a boat for you. But I can give you a life-preserver—one large enough to support half a dozen men. The wind is now blowing directly ashore. The current is setting in the same direction. You see, therefore, that if you had the pluck to trust yourself to the life-preserver—"

"Hush! Don't speak so loud!" enjoined our hero. "In fact, don't speak at all! If you really mean to help me set me free from these irons, and lower me over the side with the life-preserver. And ten thousand blessings upon you for the chance!"

"Here goes, then!"

Almost before he could realise the fact, the sentry had freed him.

"This way," then whispered that functionary, taking him by the hand. "Do as I do!"

Thus they emerged from the hold—crossed the deck—and reached the ship's side unseen.

"Here is the life-preserver," said the sentry, placing the article in Marko's hands. "You see it is a large one. You have only to place yourself in this hole in the centre and in twenty minutes or less the wind and current will beach you. And here is a rope to lower you and the apparatus into the water. Make fast, now, and hold on for life!"

The descent was safely made, and soon Marko was in the water, clinging to the life-preserver as directed.

It was as light as a feather, and easily supported all the upper part of his person.

"You are all right, then?" whispered the sentry, looking down upon him.

"Yes—a thousand thanks."

"Then away with you!"

Acting upon this order Marko cast off the rope, and was at once caught up by wind and current, which bore him swiftly away from the vessel.

Only, instead of bearing him towards the city, the lights of which were distinctly visible, the wind and current were driving him directly away from it—seaward—directly out into the Baltic.

At the cry of dismay which burst from him at this discovery there came a horrible chuckle from the deck of the vessel; and looking in that direction Marko saw that the sentry—his liberator—had produced a light, and was in the act of removing sundry disguises from his face and figure.

"That sentry is the lieutenant himself!" exclaimed Marko. "The very man!"

It was even so.

And at that discovery Marko realised only too clearly the treacherous nature of the pretended kindness to which he had been treated. He knew only too well, as he marked the hideous face of the lieutenant and heard his mocking laughter, that he had been turned adrift to die!

And the pirate must have been very certain of his prey or he would not have talked to his prisoner so frankly.

(To be Continued.)

AUSTRALIAN TROUBLES.

SEVERAL years ago the pastures of Queensland were so thickly infested with weeds that the sheep began to perish from starvation. These weeds were of a variety which is held in high estimation by the ordinary English rabbit, and a cargo of rabbits was introduced. The rabbits devoured the weeds, but unfortunately they did not stop here, but kept on multiplying and devouring every living thing, and swarmed in the streets and houses to that extent, that life became almost unendurable to the unhappy Australian. It was plainly evident that unless something was speedily done to suppress the rabbits, Queensland would become a wilderness howling with these hungry beasts. The rabbits had exterminated the weeds, but a new kind of animal was needed to exterminate the rabbits. A shipload of weasels was accordingly imported, and at present they are revelling in rabbits. The rabbits fairly melt away before them, and the weasels, with delight, beaming from their happy faces, pursue them to their hiding-places and massacre them by thousands.

The only question that bothers the Queenslanders is what they will do with the weasels when they have devoured the rabbits, and the only solution to the problem is that the next crop must be wild-cats, as they are the only animals that can take care of the weasels.

A GOOD TIME COMING.

A curious experiment has just been made under the direction of several medical men of eminence, and the results they have obtained will shortly be published in an official form. Their object was to see the effect of drink of all kinds, not necessarily stimulating and intoxicating, but even water, on the frame, and a good subject was selected in the person of a man free from disease of any kind. After a little while it was found that the patient scarcely required any liquor at all, and at the end of the trial was in capital health, and all the better for abstinence from liquors of all sorts. It is proposed to try an experiment on a healthy man to see how little food he can live on. The admirers of free trade think that the panacea against

the distress caused by the want of trade will thus be found, and that we shall yet be able to carry on the glorious struggle and beat the foreigner, for it is clear that a workman and an employer requiring scarcely any food or drink will want little wages or profits.

QUITE a heavy business is done in California in shipping to China the shells of the shrimp, which are caught in such numbers on the coast, and there is almost as much profit from the sale of the shells as from the shrimps themselves. The use they are put to in China is as a manure, and as a poison to the worm which works such destruction to the tea plant of that country. The Chinamen state that this is the only remedy at present known for the tea pest.

ONE of the shortest wills on record has just come before the Probate Court. It was that of a Mrs. Rebecca Stevenson, of Brighton, who drew up her last testament in the following words:—"Mrs. Stevenson. All his Mrs. Munsey when I die. Witness, Fanny Goddard, Sarah Bushby." The only point about which there arose any contention was regarding the meaning of the word "his," the signification of which puzzled most of those who saw it. However, the will was held to be a perfectly good one, and letters of administration were granted.

THE unjust conviction of William Habron for the Whalley Range murder, confessed to by Peace and logically proved by him and various corroborative facts to have been his act, ought to make our judges and juries do their work a little more thoughtfully for the future. A clever criminal barrister, that is, a barrister who does business in prosecuting and defending accused persons, said recently, in a London club, that seven per cent. is about the rate of errors of judges and juries—a pleasant statement.

THERE may be seen in the window of L. Lamarche, the well-known jeweller, whose establishment is situated on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, a beautiful parasol, which was finished too late to be shown at the late Exhibition. This objet d'art has a blue silk ground covered with the richest lace. The handle and stick are black, studded with splendid brilliants, and the elastic ring which serves for keeping the parasol closed is composed entirely of brilliants. The price, we were told, is 25,000 francs, or just £1,000.

THE French Government have decided to establish a night asylum for persons of the female sex, who, being without domicile or means of support, will thus be amply provided for. This measure was very necessary, for some recent statistics go to show that there are at the present time in Paris over 113,900 persons without the necessary means of existence. Never before have such a number of indigents been in the capital, and to remedy this, it is said that a law will shortly be passed interdicting the sojourn in Paris of all persons in a destitute condition.

MR. BALK, a German gentleman, recently delivered a lecture at Oxford on "the Collocation and Collectany, explaining and rendering available a system whereby it is possible to retain in readiness for convenient and immediate use the whole amount of knowledge and experience—professional, general, or personal—acquired during life." This is an astonishing educational step forward. We are not aware if he satisfactorily proved and explained his principles.

SWITZERLAND takes a most unfair advantage of us in one way—viz., in sending watches over to be "hall-marked." Swiss watches are sent over to England, the case is hall-marked, the watch sent back to Switzerland, and then re-imported here, and sold as an English watch? Whereas, if it had not the hall-mark, which most purchasers believe to be a proof of its authenticity, it would not fetch nearly the same price. Our American cousins have lately, we believe, taken a leaf out of the same book, and are using our hall-mark for a like purpose. Free traders say this is quite correct; their notions are curious, to say the least!



[THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CONNAUGHT.]

THE MARRIAGE OF H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT, K.G., AND H.R.H. PRINCESS LOUISE MARGARET OF PRUSSIA.

THE marriage of Arthur William Patrick Albert, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, Earl of Sussex, Duke of Saxony, Prince of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, with the Princess Louise Margaret Alexandra Victoria Agnes, granddaughter of the German Emperor, was celebrated at Windsor on Thursday, the 13th inst. The marriage has created a strong interest and respectful sympathy throughout the country, and the furore was brought to a climax on Thursday at Windsor, when the Royal borough put on its most festive garb.

For weeks previous the residents were engaged on all sides in flagging their houses and decorating the façades with richly-coloured hangings, monograms, wreaths of evergreens, and words of welcome, in order to do honour to the Princess upon her advent in Windsor. Among the more noticeable of these was a string of flags stretching from one of the houses in the Horseshoe Cloisters across Thames Street, the centre banner bearing a device of a couple of blended hearts, supported by the Lion of England and the Black Eagle of Germany. Above were the letters, "U and I R I," and underneath the words "Dein, ewig dein" (Thine, ever thine). Another string of flags in Park Street, crossing the road, bore on the middle flag the arms of Ireland, and the motto, "Cead mille failthe," and some German inscriptions. The Town Hall was trimly adorned with banners, and some of the houses of the Castle tradespeople were very prettily decorated, the greetings of "Prosperity to the Happy Pair," "Welcome," "Welcome to Windsor, &c.," now and then appearing on the fronts. Nearly every shop in the town was closed, and the inhabitants

of the usually quiet Royal borough enjoyed a full holiday.

The entrance to the South-Western Station was tastefully draped with flags of various nationalities, and from two lofty flagstaves placed upon each side of the porch hung the Royal and Prussian standard, that of Belgium depending from the roof of the Royal private entrance.

The streets were thronged with promenaders inspecting the decorations, criticising the mottoes, and cracking many jokes; but the chief topic of conversation was, of course, the wedding, the universal sentiment being one of pleasure and thankfulness that the weather was so fine, that the spectacle was so grand, and that everything promised to pass off auspiciously.

Within the palace the Vandyke, Zuccarelli, and other state apartments on the north side of the castle, facing "the slopes" and the Thames, were arranged and carpeted for the use of the royal guests invited, and other rooms were likewise prepared.

The animation at the Great Western terminus, Paddington, from an early hour in the morning, was most marked; but at Waterloo it was quite the reverse. Large numbers of ladies and gentlemen with tickets of various colours entitling them to reserved seats assembled at Paddington to witness the departure of her Majesty's Ministers and the Ambassadors to the English Court. They proceeded to Windsor by special train—in fact, most of the trains despatched were special ones. At 8.15 a special conveyed the Prince and Princess of Saxe-Coburg and a number of gentlemen forming the Royal Body Guard, and a little after nine a royal saloon carriage was attached to a special, conveying the two sons of the Prince of Wales, dressed in naval uniform, and their suite.

Soon afterwards the officials of the company went to work with a will laying down crimson carpeting over a large space of platform on each side of the Royal entrance. Very quickly some hundreds of ladies and gentlemen, who held the necessary tickets of admission, took possession. Soon after ten the élite were re-

ceived at the entrance by Sir Daniel Gooch, chairman of the Great Western Railway Company; Sir Alexander Wood, deputy chairman; Mr. Grierson, general manager; and Mr. Saunders, secretary, and conducted to the platform. The ladies of the party, during the brief interval between their arrival and the departure of the train, occupied the Queen's Retiring-room on the left of the Royal entrance. Noticeable amongst those on the platform for the brief space allowed to observe them were her Majesty's Ministers, all of whom, in Windsor uniform, were there, with the exception of the Earl of Beaconsfield and the Marquis of Salisbury, who, together with the Duke of Marlborough, the Duke and Duchess of Teck, the Marchioness of Salisbury, and Mr. Montagu Corry, went as guests of her Majesty to Windsor by the five o'clock train the previous evening. There were also the Ambassadors from the Continental Courts, and besides other notabilities, the Duke of Wellington, the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, Lord Alfred Paget, the Bishop of London, Dean Stanley, Lord Elcho, and numerous general officers bearing medals and stars in acknowledgment of distinguished services rendered to the State.

The crowds round the station evinced the greatest good humour; and the arrangements made by the officials were excellent, everything going off smoothly.

On arriving at Windsor the Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors, and other distinguished guests, together with the members of her Majesty's Household in Waiting, who took no part in the processions, proceeded to St. George's Chapel. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who solemnised the marriage; the Bishop of London, who is also Dean of the Chapels Royal; the Bishop of Winchester, Prelate of the Order of the Garter; the Bishop of Oxford, the Bishop of Worcester, and the Dean of Windsor soon afterwards arrived, and took their places within the rails of the altar. The Earl of Beaconsfield seemed rather indisposed, and remained seated during part of the ceremony.

The Royal and Imperial guests invited to the marriage included the King and Queen of the Belgians, the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany, Prince Frederick William of Prussia, Prince Leopold of Prussia, the Duke of Cambridge, the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, Prince and Princess Augustus of Coburg, the Earl of Beaconsfield, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Marquis of Hertford, Count Münster, Countess Marie Münster, the Marquis and Marchioness of Salisbury, the Lord Steward, Count Seckendorff, the Countess Bruhl, the Belgian Minister, Lady Churchill, Mr. Montagu Corry, Colonel Sir H. Elphinstone, Lady Ely, Colonel von Geissler, Countess de Grunno, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Sir William Jenner, Miss Knollys, Duchess of Malborough, the Marshal, the Master of the Horse; Master of the Robes, and Countess von Woina.

The Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, accompanied by the Maharane, attracted considerable attention, the Prince being clad in a gorgeous Eastern dress, his turban glittering with a resplendent plume sprayed with diamonds and other precious stones. The Maharane was clothed in cloth of gold, the true "kincob" material, which is considered to be priceless.

Twelve o'clock was now approaching and the expectant crowds converged towards the open space on Castle Hill. The guests were rapidly conveyed to St. George's Chapel in court equipages, to the number of about 200. A period of monotony now ensued, varied by now and then the arrival of some distinguished guest. By this time there were dense masses of people on the Castle Hill and on the slopes crowned by the great Central keep, from which the royal standard waves. The Coldstreams and the Berkshire Volunteers lined the route from the Castle to the Chapel; the Rifles were outside the Chapel; the Blues were in the quadrangle of the upper ward. The flashing bayonets, the unfurled colours, the scarlet, and blue; and white, and violet, and black, and grey, in raiment of men and women, soldiers, civilians, the frequent gleam of silver and bullion—all went to make up a variegated kaleidoscope of wondrous beauty and effectiveness.

Large numbers of Eton boys with their unmistakably well-bred English air and quiet, gentlemanly demeanour, were to be seen, and interspersed among the crowds—an unnecessary precaution in peace-loving England—were several German and Russian detectives, whose services were not to our knowledge called into requisition. Large numbers of Metropolitan police, including I.E. reserve men, told off for duty within the precincts of the castle, but who were quite unable to direct a person to any particular spot, were present under the general supervision of Superintendent Gernon. The Yeomen of the Guards attended in the High Street. They are veterans, and in their beaver hats, white frills, scarlet jackets embroidered with gold, and buckled shoes, with their breasts glittering with medals, formed an attractive picture.

ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL.—THE CEREMONY.

About half-past twelve the National Anthem was played, which created murmurs of expectation both inside and outside the chapel, followed by cheers of admiration as the first procession, consisting of twelve carriages resplendent with gold-coloured silk, scarlet cloth, and gilt ornaments, and with the mirror-like glass of the varnish fresh upon their panels appeared at the western side of the chapel. Few of those who saw those dress coaches—those handsome old specimens of coach-building—as they rolled majestically through the castle grounds had the faintest conception of the labour and cost entailed in their re-decoration. They were, however, regarded with pride as specimens of national coach-building, and although the youngest of them is twenty-five years old, there are no modern carriages which can be compared with them in point of grand outlines or detailed

finish. These coaches have not been used since the marriage of the Princess Louise to the Marquis of Lorne, eight years ago.

Some time was occupied by the carriages, with their coachmen in scarlet livery, three-cornered hats, and powdered and curled wigs, in passing through the gateway and setting down their occupants. In the first carriage sat Colonel von Geissler, whom humble folk would call the tutor, but whom Royal usage terms the governor, of the young sailor brother of the bride. In the sixth sat the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, arrayed with Oriental opulence, the Maharane, the Duke of Teck, and the Prince of Saxe-Weimar. In the seventh, the place of honour was held by the Princess Mary of Cambridge; the ninth by Prince William of Prussia, the Duke of Cambridge, and the Duchess of Edinburgh; the eleventh by the Princess of Wales with four of her children—and this carriage did not come in for the smallest meed of acclaim; and the last by the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany and the King and Queen of the Belgians.

The carriages were all drawn by two horses. Hardly had they passed out of sight when the Queen's cavalcade came in view, descending the hill. This comprised but three carriages—her Majesty's, which was the last, being conspicuous from the fact that it was drawn by four horses. The Queen frequently bowed in acknowledgment of the hurricane of loyal shouts which saluted her.

The Queen wore rich black velvet, white cap, and streamers, surmounted with a splendid diamond coronet to represent the crown, while the great Koh-in-noor (Mountain of Light) rivalled the sun. We did not notice any other jewellery; but the Ribbon of the Garter was fastened on the left shoulder with a priceless gem. Her Majesty, though a little agitated and anxious, looked very well, and bowed right and left, the brilliant assemblage returning the salutation with much reverence.

The Princess of Wales was dressed in a cream-coloured dress, covered with rare old lace looped up with black bows; her little daughters were similarly attired.

The bride-elect was dressed very simply—a white silk dress trimmed with myrtle flowers, and a remarkably small bridal veil, with no jewellery save a grand necklace of brilliants; but there were the traditional orange-blossoms, which harmonised well with her glossy, nut-brown hair. Without being handsome, nor in fact pretty in the accepted sense of the word, the Princess Margaret is undoubtedly good-looking and very engaging, in spite of the rather pronounced determination of her features. Her complexion is a remarkably fair one, and her magnificent hazel eyes set off and embellish her pleasing countenance.

The Princess Beatrice wore a magnificent blue dress, and the rest of the Royal family and children were suitably attired.

Handel's March from "Hercules" was played on the organ as the procession of guests moved up the chapel; Mendelssohn's March from "Athalia" was played during the progress of the Queen's procession; the March "Albert Edward," by Sir George Elvey, was played on the arrival of the bridegroom's procession; and as the bride's procession passed up the chapel Handel's "Occasional Overture" was played. At the conclusion of the ceremony Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" was sung by the choir, and Mendelssohn's Wedding March was played on the organ.

Prior to the arrival of the bride the bridegroom appeared somewhat nervous and fidgety, looking about him ceaselessly; and his best man, the Prince of Wales, often extended to him a smiling encouragement. Soon there came a grand flourish of trumpets, with the sound of hearty cheering outside the chapel, and the bride, escorted by her father and the Crown Prince of Germany, and attended by her eight bridesmaids, came up the nave in slow procession.

The eight bridesmaids were as to the colour and material of their costumes similarly attired to the bride. The bridegroom now waxed bolder, and took from his bride with tender gracefulness her bouquet and handed it to his best man. The

bride gave a rapid glance at her future spouse, then bowed deeply to the Queen, to those assembled round the altar, and to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The wedding party being now assembled, amidst profound silence, the Archbishop of Canterbury advanced to the rails and commenced the service. After "the charge," no one replying to the question as to whether any impediment to the marriage was known of, came the solemn question addressed to the bridegroom "Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?" and so forth to the end. To which the bridegroom answered, "I will." Naturally the bride returned the same reply to the similar query put to her. The responses of the Duke were clearly heard throughout the chapel, but the voice of the Princess was low and quivering. To the query "Who giveth this woman"—there are happily no differences made for princesses or princes—"to be married to this man?" the Red Prince replied that he did, and, from the action of the Crown Prince of Germany, her other supporter, it seemed as though he joined in the answer. Then the Archbishop, joining their hands together, bade them repeat after him the formula which makes them one, and is followed by the imposition of the ring. Here there was a slight hitch—the only one. Where was the ring? The bridegroom had to apply to the Prince of Wales, inattentive to his duties at that moment; but, with a smile he could not restrain, the elder brother at last produced it, and the Service went on.

In all these little ceremonies the bridegroom appeared to be thoroughly well versed—he had learned his drill, to use his own soldier-like language—and he frequently whispered his bride to kneel, rise, and so forth at every proper time, for she, strange to say, seemed to know little about the Service. Then, all kneeling, the Archbishop, with a loud clear voice, growing in strength as it went on, gave the prayer beginning "O, Eternal God," and presently, after the solemn admonition "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," all knelt again, and His Grace delivered the Blessing in the most impressive manner well possible. The Duke and the Princess were man and wife, the choir—that of St. George's, with some from the Chapel Royal, and one Eton singer—sang "Blessed are they that fear the Lord," and the following Psalm, and with the concluding prayers, the solemnest act in the lives of these youthful Royal Personages was brought to a fitting end. At the conclusion of the ceremony, which was celebrated with the splendour and magnificence for which the British Court is renowned, the bride took her husband's hand, and, with the brightest of smiles, walked through the brilliant veda of nobles and statesmen, bowing graciously right and left. The sun now shone gloriously, and the scene was one living mass of brilliant colour, the blaze of gems and the sheen of the richest hues in gorgeous combination. At the door of the chapel the eight bridesmaids left the bride and returned to their apartment.

Before long the boom of a gun from the saluting battery in the Long Walk announced to the thousands in waiting that the twain were made one. Shortly afterwards the procession, now massed into one long cortège, emerged from the portal of the chapel in the reverse order of that in which it entered it. Previous to leaving the chapel, and amidst general peals of artillery, the Duke kissed his bride, and were the first to leave the chapel and proceed up the Castle Hill, where, within the precincts of the Castle, a large concourse of well-dressed individuals admitted by ticket were gathered, and cheered the bride and bridegroom most lustily. Her Majesty came next, being wrapped up previous to leaving by the ladies in waiting in an ermine robe, their own lengthy trains being looped up, shawls of all sorts put on—in fact, the scene resembled that which one would see in the lobbies of the Opera. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh followed, then the remainder of the Royal family and guests, and all came in for grand ovations.

The Queen and Royal party assembled in the Green Drawing Room to witness the signature of the Registry. The form is strictly prescribed by Act of Parliament. The Royal Marriage Act (12th George III., cap. 11) provides that no descendant of George II. (except the issues of princesses married into foreign families) shall be capable of contracting matrimony without the consent of the Sovereign, signified under the Great Seal and also declared in Council. And the statute further directs that this consent, to preserve the memory thereof, shall be set out in the license and register of marriage, and entered in the books of the Privy Council. The license in the present case is a special license obtained from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and dated, as we understand, February 25, 1879.

It is well known that special licences permit the parties to be married at any time, in any church or chapel, or other meet and convenient place, and it will have been observed that the present marriage was solemnised after the usual hour of twelve, the bride not leaving the Castle for the Chapel till half-past twelve. The consent by law required will, of course, have been duly recorded in the license and register. It was signified nearly a year ago at a Council at the Court at Windsor, in the presence of the Lord President of the Council (Duke of Richmond and Gordon), the Lord Chamberlain (Marquis of Hertford), and two distinguished Privy Counsellors (the Earl of Beaconsfield and Mr. Cross).

The marriage, as a civil contract, will be by virtue of this consent, the absence of which would render it wholly invalid. The consent was signified under the Great Seal.

DEPARTURE FOR CLAREMONT.

ABOUT a quarter past four the Horse Guards (Blues) stood ready in the quadrangle of Windsor Castle to escort the newly-wedded pair to Claremont. They drove through the High Street and entered the Long Walk in an open carriage drawn by four white horses, with outriders in blue.

From the windows of the private apartments the Queen, the Royal Family, and the Royal guests looked on, while assembled on the pavement were many of the other guests, with John Brown, in his Highland dress, a conspicuous figure. When their Royal Highnesses had taken their seats and were saluted, a start was made, the band playing the National Anthem. Some of the ladies on the pavement threw handfuls of rice into the carriage, and slippers. But John Brown was armed seemingly with any number of slippers, and running after the carriage almost to the gateway, where it turned out to pass down Castle Hill, he deftly threw several at the carriage, while the newly-married pair laughingly ducked. The bride was dressed in a long travelling cloak, wearing a white lace bonnet, and having a snowy lace parasol, edged with green flowers.

The Royal pair arrived at Claremont about six o'clock. After the honeymoon they will embark on board the yacht "Osborne" for a trip in the Mediterranean, then return to Buckingham Palace, where a suite of apartments has been prepared for their reception, and will reside there till Bagshot Mansion is ready for their occupation.

The Duke of Connaught is the third son of our beloved Queen, and was born at Buckingham Palace, May 1, 1850. He entered the Military Academy at Woolwich as a cadet in 1866, became a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers in 1868, and a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in February 1869. He was appointed a lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade in August, 1869, and a captain, in excess of the establishment of the Regiment, in 1871. On his attaining his majority in the last-named year Parliament voted him a grant of £15,000 per annum, and now that he has led his blushing bride to the altar it will be supplemented with another £10,000 a year. Doubtless when the honeymoon is over, the duke will free himself from his courtly fetters and learn to qualify himself for actual service on the field of battle.

The Princess Louise of Prussia (for there is another Louise—our own charming princess, the Marchioness of Lorne) is the third and youngest daughter of Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, so famous during the Franco-German war under his popular name of "The Red Prince." Her name in full is Louise Margaret Alexandra Victoria Agnes. She was born at Potsdam, July 21, 1860. The published photographs have certainly not done justice to her. She is a comely, homely-looking princess, full face, rather pale, with nut-brown hair and dark hazel eyes, with a rather demure expression. The Duke of Connaught, we learn, first saw the Princess Louise Margaret in 1877 during the festivities accompanying the double wedding of the Princess Charlotte and Elizabeth, which he attended in company with his brother, the Prince of Wales.

In a political point of view the alliance is a happy and auspicious one. The great German community is of all nations in Europe our nearest kindred, and every friend of peace would advocate the maintenance of friendly relations with the Teutonic races inhabiting Great Britain, America, and Germany, as being most likely to secure rational order and advancement throughout the world. We should be glad for many reasons that a new blood tie has been formed between England and Germany. According to rumour it is a love match; it is superfluous to remark that for other considerations than love—political inducements, for example, have too often been connected with royal marriages. All our readers will, we feel certain, echo our wish that the union may be a happy one. Windsor has never beheld a happier pair, or a pair more worthily matched. Married life in royal circles has unfortunately seldom had its true and tender and ennobling experiences.

THE WEDDING CAKE.

THE bridal cake stands 5ft. 6in. in height, and is shaped as a temple—base, columns, vaulted roofs, and ornamentation cast in white sugar. It was built in the confectionary of the castle by Mr. Ponder. The super-structure consists of two vaulted roofs, beautifully chased and supported by admirably-proportioned pillars with Corinthian capitals. At the four corners of what may be called the lower chamber are stationed four female figures, as clearly cut as if they had been chiselled, emblematic of the four Continents—Europe, Asia, Africa, and America—whilst at intervals are cupids driving swans or doves. Within the balustrade, made up of dwarf pillars joined by a filigree-work of fine lace, are the figures of Cupid and Psyche, whilst in plaques of sugar, on white satin panels, are the English and Prussian Arms. The various pedestals bear the interwoven monogram of bride and bridegroom, whilst the base is richly decorated with scroll brackets, from which are suspended festoons of orange blossoms. There were also provided by the same artist for table decorations, some 500 bonbons of every conceivable design in form and colour.

The following is a list of the presents to H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn on his marriage:

Silver centrepieces, from H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.
Ring (cat's-eye and two diamonds), from H.R.H. the Princess of Wales.
Large picture, group of flowers, from H.R. and I.H. the Crown Princess of Germany.
Two solitaires (diamond), from H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh.
Two silver candlesticks, from Prince and Princess Christian.
Old silver candlesticks, from Princess Louise and Marquis of Lorne.
Six old gold and silver spoons, from the Duchess of Cambridge.
Two lamps, from H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.
Claret jug, mounted in gold, from the Hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.
Silver fish carvers, from the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg.

China tea service, from Princess Charlotte of Prussia.

Dresden china clock and candelabrum, from Princess Augusta of Saxe Coburg.

Letter box, from Count Gleichen.

Old drinking cup, which belonged to the Duke of Sussex, from Lord Newry.

Old silver cup, tripod stand, from Madame Van de Weyer.

Ebony screen with glass centre, from Lady Macnamara.

Small silver Roman lamp, from Major and Lady Harriet Bunbury.

Liqueur stand, silver mounted, from Colonel McNeill.

Bird cage, from Lady Lisgar.

Two blue vases, from Colonel and Mrs. Keith Frazer.

Glass jug and two goblets, from Albert Grey, Esq.

Square timepiece, wooden case, from Lady Northcote.

Two gold candlesticks, from Lady Lis-towel.

Two blue and white vases, from Lord Lis-towel.

Silver blotting-book, from Lady Bessal-bane.

Silver snuff-box, from Mrs. Houston Bos-well.

Silver money-box, from Gilbert Tarquhar, Esq.

Small clock, wooden frame, from Lord and Lady Edward Clinton.

Twelve silver salt cellars, from Miss E. Balch.

Two gold pepper-boxes, from General Hast-ings Doyle.

Silver note-book, from Mrs. Holmes.

Old Spanish silver lamp, from Hon. Mrs. Woodhouse.

Silver salad bowl, from Captain the Hon. John Yorke.

Silver salad bowl, from Colonel Farquharson.

Shell tray, from Major Musgrave, late Rifle Brigade.

Russian leather blotting-book, from Mr. P. Doyle.

Two wooden figures, from Lord Barrington.

Silver bread-basket, from Captain and the Hon. Mrs. Scott, R.B.

Large stand clock, from the Hon. Charles Bourke.

Blue and white china clock and two vases, from the Duke of St. Albans.

Silver cup, from the Marquis of Hertford.

Large gold plate, from Lord Beaconsfield.

Large brandy and soda tray, from Lord Suffield.

Ivory vase, set in gold, from the Hon. Mrs. Dawney.

Two china figures (birds), from Captain Buchanan.

Looking-glass, silver frame, from Prince Leopold's household.

Blue china clock, on two pillars, from Mrs. Sykes.

Two silver bedroom candlesticks, from the Duke of Connaught's servants.

Large silver cup, from the officers of the 7th Hussars.

Gold and silver basket, from Lady Molesworth.

Gold shaving pot, from Colonel Ramston.

Two pictures, from Count Sendoroff.

Large picture, "A Slave," from Mr. Brittle.

Silver sword (paper knife), from Captain Peel, 7th Hussars.

Silver bread-basket, from Sir Gerald and Lady Fitzgerald.

Silver centrepiece, from officers of London Irish Rifles.

Bread board and knife, from Major Bayley, 31st Regiment.

Silver mounted clock, suspended from tripod of elephant's tusks, from Lieutenant-General Parke, C.B.

Woollen goods, from the inhabitants of Fair Isles.

China cup, from Mr. Kanne.

Old painting, from Lord Granville.

Gold cigarette case, enamelled, from Captain Swaine.

Silver sandwich-box, from Walter Douglas Campbell, Esq.

Old china tea service, from the Dowager Lady Henniker.

Ebony box of stationery, from Admiral the Hon. C. Glynn.

Two vases, from Lieut.-Colonel and Lady Adela Larking.

Inkstand, from Colonel and the Hon. Mrs. Gordon.

Silver inkstand, from the Hon. Mrs. C. Yorke.

Cigarette case (leather), from Lieut.-Colonel Mildmay.

Tea-table, from the Rev. Canon Duckworth.

Old china dish, from Captain the Hon. Charles Eliot.

Gold claret cup, from Lord and Lady Charles Beresford.

Gold box of filigree work, from Mr. Baillie Hamilton.

Diamond pin, from Colonel Annesley.

Silver inkstand and bell, from Captain A. Paget, Scots Guards.

Four silver pepper-boxes, from Lady Antrim.

Two books, from Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Martin.

Silver inkstand and two candlesticks, from Colonel and the Hon. Mrs. Blundell.

Two silver gilt bowls, from Colonel Hon. F. Stynley.

Silver bowl, from Lord Carrington.

Silver cup, from Mrs. Post and Mrs. Adair.

Silver horse shoe, from Captain Crosbie, 60th Rifles.

Stick (silver monogram), from Colonel Frazer, of Castle Frazer.

Silver jug, from the Gentlemen of the Prince of Wales' Household.

Large gold dish and ewer, from Earl Spencer.

Silver cigarette case, from Colonel Hudson and Captain Hare.

Old china cup, from Dr. O. Clayton.

Silver cigarette case and match-box, from Lord Methuen.

Five large silver cups, from Officers of the Rifle Brigade.

Inkstand, blotting-book, and paper knife, from Lord Sydney.

Two ewers, on round dishes, from Lady Michel.

Gold incense burner, from Lord Vespi.

Indian canafe, from Major Dillon.

Among the presents made to the bride of H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught is a souvenir, received by her a few days ago from the "Prussian Society of Matrons and Maidens," consisting of a large basket in gold-bronze, lined with purple velvet, and supported by three golden claws upon a massive metal frame. Three medallions adorn the exterior of this resplendent basket; upon the central medallion are embroidered in flat-stitch the Royal bride's initials, "L." in myrtle-blossoms and "M." in daisies, surmounted by a princely coronet embroidered in gold and oriental pearls; while the other two medallions exhibit bunches of daisies and delicate grasses in hand embroidery. The embroideries are pronounced by all who have seen this chef-d'œuvre of needlework to be masterpieces, and have all been executed by members of the association since the announcement of the Princess's betrothal to the Duke of Connaught was made public in Berlin.

STATISTICS.

COST OF SMOKING AND DRINKING IN AMERICA.—During the fiscal year ended on June 30, 1878, notwithstanding the hard times, 1,905,063,000 cigars were consumed. The total value of the cigars consumed in the year would be about £38,101,200. In addition there were also consumed 25,312,433 lbs. of tobacco for smoking, the value of which is estimated at £3,000,000. 317,485,600 gallons of fermented liquors were consumed, or over seven gallons per

head of the entire population (estimated at about 44,000,000), including women and children. Fermented and spirituous drinks cost the people of the United States £119,200,000, or £2 13s. per head. During the last financial year the consumption of beer increased, while that of spirituous liquors declined, 1,500,000 gallons more of the former and 6,520,000 gallons less of the latter having been consumed than during the preceding year, a fact which, perhaps, ought to be considered an advance on the road of temperance.

THE SINGER'S ALMS.

IN Lyons, in the mart of that French town,

Years since, a woman, leading a fair child,

Craved a small alms of one who, walking down

The thoroughfare, caught the child's glance and smiled

To see behind its eyes a noble soul.

He paused, but found he had no coin to dole.

His guardian angel warned him not to lose

This chance of pearl to do another good;

So as he waited, sorry to refuse

The asked-for-penny, there aside he stood,

And with his hat held as by limb the nest,

He covered his kind face and sang his best.

The sky was blue above, and all the lane

Of commerce, where the singer stood, was filled,

And many paused, and listening paused again,

To hear the voice that thro' and thro' them thrilled.

I think the guardian angel helped along

That cry for pity woven in the song.

The singer stood among the beggars there,

Before a church, and overhead the spire,

A slim, perpetual finger in the air

Held toward heaven, land of the heart's desire,

As tho' an angel pointing up had said,

"Yonder a crown awaits this singer's head."

The hat of its gathered coins was emptied soon,

Into the woman's lap, who drenched with tears

Her kiss upon the hand of help. 'Twas noon

And noon in her glad heart drove forth her fears,

The singer, pleased, passed on and softly thought,

"Men will not know by whom this deed was wrought."

But when at night he came upon the stage,

Cheer after cheer went up from that wide throng,

And flowers rained on him. Naught could assuage

The tumult of the welcome, save the song

That for the beggars he had sung that day

While standing on the city's busy way.

Oh, cramped and narrow is the man who lives

Only for self and pawns his years away

For gold: nor knows the joy a good deed gives;

But feels his heart sink slowly, day by day,

And dies at last, his bond of fate outrun;

No high aim sought, no worthy action done.

H. B. D.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

WINTER SALAD.—Cut one pound red cabbage in thin shreds, blanch it in boiling water for fifteen minutes; cool, drain, and put in a basin with one ounce of salt, and let it pickle for four hours; then pour off the water, add half a gill of vinegar, mix, and let it remain for two hours; trim one pound celery, cut it in small dice, and blanch it in boiling water for ten minutes and drain it; cut an equal quantity of cold boiled potatoes in the same way. A quarter of an hour before serving, drain the cabbage, and mix the whole in a salad bowl, adding three table spoonfuls of oil, one table spoonful of chopped tarragon, and two small pinches of pepper, and serve.

COLD SLAW.—Cut the cabbage very fine; put into a bowl, and sprinkle a little salt over it; bruise the cabbage with a potato-masher. Then mix three table spoons of sugar, and four of vinegar, with half pint of nice sweet cream, and mix it through the cabbage. The cabbage should not be too green.

FRITTERS.—To a pint of milk add the yolks of six eggs well beaten and half a teaspoonful of salt; then mix in as much flour as will make it of a proper thickness to drop easily from a spoon, beat well, and at the last add the whites of the eggs beaten to a stiff froth. Do not mix much, or stir to destroy the froth, but draw the spoon lightly across two or three times. Have ready a pan of boiling lard and drop in a spoonful at a time, and fry a light brown.

MISCELLANEOUS.

AN American, desirous of rivalling the feats of the pedestrians, offers to wager that he will pick up 2,700 dollars (singly) in 2,700 quarters of a minute, if any one will give him the chance.

"COUPON" asks, as a puzzle, if anyone can place eight draughtsmen on the board so that none are on the same line either to a castle or a bishop's move. He says, "There are five different ways of doing so, but I have seen people puzzled for hours before they could do even one."

THE nickname bestowed on the Prince Imperial by the Royalists is "Zulu I."

THE Budget will be introduced the first week in April. Sir Stafford Northcote would like to wait as long as possible for good news.

THE limited training of the Militia and Yeomanry this year is with the view of saving money, as the deficit to be announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be something considerable.

AT St. Paul's Cathedral the Chapter have introduced a novelty which promises to be a success: it is a quarter-of-an-hour sermon preached in the nave during luncheon time. Luncheon and sermon combined are likely to prove a success in E.C.

PEOPLE in Persia are praying for snow, and unless their petition is answered it seems very probable that a famine will set in next summer. In order that there may be abundant water for irrigation purposes in the spring it is necessary that the snow should descend considerably below the summer snow line.

FROM some statistics illustrating the rate of desertion in the army, it would appear that more than seventeen out of every 1,000 men in the army in the year 1878 deserted; that most of them were under one year's service; and that out of these seventeen men quite sixteen deserted on home stations, desertions from foreign stations being almost nil. Recruits appear to form the bulk of deserters.

AT the sale of the Earl of Lonsdale's works of art Mr. Currie gave £245 for a Rose du Barry Sevres cabinet. A square-shaped Chelsea vase, twenty-one inches high, with deep blue ground and medallions, brought £250, and a pair of vases with covers 420 guineas.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LEONORA.—1. Properly, you should be the presiding divinity at your uncle's table, as you reside permanently with him; but if the sister is very much older than yourself perhaps it would be as well not to insist. 2. The gentleman must not waste your valuable time. You must bring him to the point. Consult a female friend.

STUDENT.—Your first care should be to strengthen your memory, which will save you time and tend to improve your deductive powers. Attention will do much, but the association of ideas is the great secret of success in memory work. If you can go to Professor Stokes, of the Polytechnic, London, he can coach you in memory quickly, or he can assist you by post.

LADYBERD.—1. No. 2. Very fair.

REDCROSS.—A woman is at liberty to marry in the name she has been known by for years; but in your case it is a deception on your intended, and might cause you future unhappiness. Why not tell him? You would be far more comfortable.

K. P.—All bodies that absorb moisture become heavy in consequence.

M. S. T.—In the neighbourhood of our best cities you should have no difficulty in obtaining admission to a normal or other similar establishment, and so qualify yourself for teaching.

ELECTRO.—If that young man means to be your brother-in-law, and is received at your house as a friend, it is proper for you to speak to him as one gentleman to another. The sooner this is done the better. Mary's permanent alienation might have been averted by frank and timely explanation.

WILL.—There ought to be perfect confidence between two persons who are to fight the battle of life together. You are not, perhaps, too young to be married, but in the circumstances some delay is probably a wise precaution.

TINKER.—The most probable account of the difference you note is the greater amount of ocean—with its very uniform temperature—in the Southern Hemisphere than in the Northern.

S. H.—The bridegroom should stand, not only during the ceremony, but all through life on the right side of the bride.

JOB.—Our answer is that you should consult a skilful surgeon.

T. C.—If you stay in it long enough your health will form a rough test. If you are not yourself a chemist give a piece of the paper to a chemist, and he will tell you if the "green" is the kind produced by deleterious chemicals. You need, not, however, tell the hotel-keeper and put him to the trouble of getting an opinion on the other side. In the meanwhile, you may safely change your room.

TOM.—Your friend is right. One of the first cousins is "first cousin once removed" to the child of the other. This is the language commonly employed, though there are local variations.

DAISY.—No. We should advise you, as you are only sixteen, to defer the wedding until there is reasonable assurance that the gentleman is not liable to such fluctuations of temperature. Sudden changes, from hot to cold, are bad in the weather; but they are worse in a husband.

AMY.—If your only reason for doubting your lover is that his brother sometimes expresses a disbelief in his ultimate faithfulness, you should certainly give him an opportunity to show that he is trustworthy. But if, as your second question suggests, you have knowledge of his unfaithfulness to others, you should not expect him to be true to you. A girl's parents are usually her best counsellors in such matters.

G. W.—The idea of living so as to meet the approbation of the young lady's father is the one for you to act upon. If you do that the chances are that the result will be all that you could reasonably hope for.

LOUIE.—In society, where everybody is well acquainted, etiquette is not observed so rigidly as it is in formal gatherings.

JOHN H.—As there is another suitor in the field delay would be dangerous. If you are in downright earnest in your wooing you should make your views and wishes known at once, or else you may lose the young lady altogether.

IN No. 832 WILL BE COMMENCED A NEW STORY, ENTITLED,
"LORD JASPER'S SECRET; OR, BETWEEN PALACE AND PRISON,"
 BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS."

LILLY, twenty-one, fond of home, dark hair and eyes, good-looking, dark, medium height, would like to correspond with a young gentleman. Respondent must be twenty-three, dark, fond of home and children, good-looking.

A. W., fair, good-looking, light brown curly hair, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady with a view to matrimony.

CLARA, nineteen, medium height, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two, tall, of a loving disposition, good-looking.

ELAINE, twenty, fair, Auburn hair, grey eyes, good-looking, fond of home, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about the same age.

H. A. and A. B., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. H. A. is twenty-three, medium height. A. K. is twenty, tall. Respondents must be fond of music and dancing, good-looking.

MARY and DORA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Mary is twenty, medium height, light brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home. Dora is fair, medium height, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

WILLIAM, twenty-one, tall, dark brown hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Must be nineteen, fond of home and children.

B. D. and D. L., two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen. B. D. is twenty-four, good-tempered, of a loving disposition, fond of home. D. L. is twenty, medium height, fair.

"SINCE MOTHER DIED."

The sun shines just as bright to-day
 As it e'er did before;
 The world is busy, glad, and gay,
 And jogs on, as of yore;
 But yet to us, the girls and boys
 Who were her hope and pride,
 It seems bereft of half the joys
 It had since mother died.

We wander through the lonely halls,
 We linger in her room—
 The pictures hang upon the walls,
 The roses are in bloom;
 And yet our hues seem faint and dim,
 As if they tried to hide—
 And deepening shadows fitful seem
 On all since mother died.

No voice, though tender it may be
 And loving, seems like hers,
 No gentle hand caressing
 Such deep emotions stirs;
 When purple twilight settled down
 We children sought her side—
 That pleasant hour—our joy—her crown;
 We miss since mother died.

Yet when we think that she has done
 With earthly care and pain,
 We cannot wish our darling one
 Back to this life again.
 She stepped within the golden gate
 Close to her Saviour's side;
 While we bereft but watch and wait
 Below since mother side. M. A. K.

A. C. A., seventeen, tall, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age, fair, blue eyes, tall.

TORMENTOR, LADLE, and FLAPPER JACK, three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Tormentor is dark, medium height. Ladle is tall, fair. Flapper Jack is of medium height, fair, fond of home and dancing.

ERTHIE, eighteen, tall, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two.

LITTLE LULU and SALLY LUX, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Lulu is twenty-two, thoroughly domesticated, dark. Sally is twenty-one, good-tempered, tall.

VICTORIA, thirty, dark hair, blue eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a gentleman about thirty-five.

NELLIE, thirty-five, a widow, loving, would like to correspond with a widower about the same age.

FLOXY W., nineteen, golden hair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony.

F. C. and B. L., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. F. C. is twenty-four, handsome, dark. B. L. is fair, blue eyes, good-tempered.

W. S., twenty, dark, of a loving disposition, domesticated, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-four, good-tempered.

S. M. and N. E., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. S. M. is twenty-four, dark, fond of home and children, Auburn hair, blue eyes. N. E. is twenty-one, dark brown hair, blue eyes, good-looking, medium height, loving. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-two.

NETTIE and ROSE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Nettie is twenty, fond of home. Rose is eighteen, fond of home and children.

BLANCH, dark hair and eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young man. Respondent must be about twenty-five.

B. S. M., twenty-two, medium height, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

CLARE, twenty-four, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age, dark, good-looking.

G. D. and E. P., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony between twenty and twenty-three. G. D. is twenty-one, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of home and children. E. P. is twenty-five, dark hair, hazel eyes, dark, medium height.

LILL, eighteen, brown hair, dark blue eyes, medium height, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-one, dark.

HIGHLYKE, twenty-one, curly hair, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondent must be eighteen, good-looking.

P. T., eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondents must be about seventeen, domesticated, brown hair, blue eyes, dark.

DORA and KATE, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Dora is twenty-one, fond of home, fair, medium height, loving. Kate is twenty, domesticated, fond of home and children, fair.

BOWSPRIT and TOPGALLANT MAST, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Bowspirit is good-looking, tall, of a loving disposition. Topgallant Mast is of medium height, fond of home.

ALICE and CLARE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Alice is twenty, dark, fond of home and children. Clare is fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

H. T., eighteen, thoroughly domesticated, tall, dark, light hair, hazel eyes, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-one, of a loving disposition.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

E. J. is responded to by—Patrick, twenty-two, call, good-looking.

C. B. by—Our Allace, nineteen, tall, dark, brown hair and eyes.

JOE by—Milly, nineteen.

ALFRED by—Kitty is twenty-two, fond of dancing, tall, curly hair, brown eyes.

FATTIE by—Ernest, nineteen, hazel eyes, and fond of music.

E. A. by—E. G., seventeen, brown hair, dark eyes, good-looking.

A. E. S. by—L. C., seventeen, dark hair and eyes.

CARRY by—Herbert.

G. F. by—Andrew.

CYRIL by—Florence, nineteen, light brown hair, hazel eyes, domesticated, fond of home.

C. B. by—Lillian, eighteen, Auburn hair, grey eyes, and good-looking.

D. A. by—Nellie, eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes, and loving.

A. S. by—T. B., twenty, hazel eyes.

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